

BEFORE THE  
CALIFORNIA BUREAU OF STATE AUDITS (BSA)

In the matter of

Citizens Redistricting Commission (CRC)  
Applicant Review Panel (ARP) Public Meeting

555 Capitol Mall, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

WEDNESDAY, September 8, 2010  
1:00 P.M.

Reported by:  
Peter Petty

## APPEARANCES

## Members Present

Nasir Ahmadi, Chair

Mary Camacho, Vice Chair

Kerri Spano, Panel Member

## Staff Present

Stephanie Ramirez-Ridgeway, Panel Counsel

Diane Hamel, Executive Secretary

## Interviewees

Gina Marie Simas

Fay Mason

Byrd A. Lochtie

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: The hour being 1:01 and all  
3 Panelists being present, let's go back on record. Our  
4 next Applicant is Gina Marie Simas.

5 Ms. Simas, are you ready to begin?

6 MS. SIMAS: I am.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Please start the clock.  
8 What specific skills do you believe a good Commissioner  
9 should possess? Of those skills, which do you possess?  
10 Which do you not possess, and how will you compensate for  
11 it? Is there anything in your life that would prohibit or  
12 impair your ability to perform all of the duties of a  
13 Commissioner?

14 MS. SIMAS: I want to begin by saying thank you  
15 for having me here and giving me an opportunity to be  
16 interviewed for this Commission.

17 I broke the first question into two types of  
18 skills, first, there are the skills mandated by the Voters  
19 FIRST Act, which are an ability to be impartial and an  
20 appreciation of California's diverse demographics and  
21 geography and analytical skills. In my Supplemental  
22 Application, I detailed how I possess these skills, so I  
23 won't spend time repeating myself, however, if time allows  
24 at the end of the interview, I'd like to add more  
25 information regarding my ability to be impartial.

1           In addition to the statutorily required skills,  
2   there are skills that I believe would be beneficial.  
3   These include being a good listener, the ability to learn  
4   quickly, the ability to relate to, to respect, and to  
5   value the opinions of all walks of life, the capability of  
6   collaborating well with others, the ability to compromise  
7   and be flexible, or organizational and management skills,  
8   and a fervent work ethic. I believe that I possess all of  
9   these skills and have frequently relied on them during the  
10   last 10 years as a litigator at my law firm. If time  
11   allows at the end of the interview, I am more than willing  
12   to elaborate on each of the skills I've identified.

13           Finally, it's not a skill, but a trait that I  
14   believe every Commissioner should possess, is that they  
15   should generally want to serve on this Commission for the  
16   right reasons. And those reasons were to improve  
17   California. Commissioners should possess energy, stamina,  
18   and an excitement about the Commission's potential for  
19   advancing the interests of California citizens.  
20   Commissioners should not be doing this for power,  
21   prestige, or the advancement of a particular political  
22   party's interests. My sole motivation for applying to  
23   this Commission is to improve California.

24           As for the question of what skills I don't  
25   possess, this is a difficult question. Because this is

1 the first time that a Commission is redistricting in  
2 California, it is definitely difficult to identify every  
3 skill that is needed. No Applicant will possess knowledge  
4 in every area; that is the benefit of having a 14-person  
5 Commission. I can bring my legal training and expertise  
6 to the Commission. What I lack is that I have never been  
7 involved in a redistricting project. To compensate for  
8 this, the last few months, I have spent numerous hours  
9 reading articles on the subject of redistricting,  
10 reviewing various redistricting and mapping websites, and  
11 studying redistricting mapping software programs,  
12 including Maptitude.

13           Also, over the past few months, I have reviewed  
14 case law regarding redistricting issues, so although I am  
15 nowhere near a redistricting expert, I have a much better  
16 understanding of what's involved in the process. Although  
17 it is impossible to predict all of the challenges that may  
18 arise during the 10-year commitment, I am confident that I  
19 am capable of handling any challenge that comes my way.

20           Finally, there is nothing in my life that would  
21 prohibit or impair my ability to perform all of the duties  
22 of a Commissioner. I am willing and able to dedicate 60  
23 hours a week, if necessary, to make this task successful.  
24 I truly am so excited about this historic opportunity and  
25 I cannot impress upon you enough how much I want to be a

1 part of this Commission. I promise that, if given the  
2 opportunity to become a member, I will work as diligently  
3 and as impartially as I can to ensure that the  
4 Commission's work is a success.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a circumstance  
6 from your personal experience where you had to work with  
7 others to resolve a conflict or a difference of opinion.  
8 Please describe the issue and describe your role in  
9 addressing and resolving the conflict. If you are  
10 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting  
11 Commission, tell us how you would resolve conflicts that  
12 may arise among the Commissioners.

13 MS. SIMAS: As a litigation attorney, my job  
14 requires that I work with others to resolve disputes.  
15 Often times, people perceive lawyers as people who  
16 exacerbate conflicts, however, in my 10 years of practice,  
17 I have learned that my clients are much better served by  
18 having a lawyer who is congenial to their opposing counsel  
19 and open-minded to the other side's position. I have  
20 found that lawyers who antagonize and inflame opposing  
21 counsel generally end up hurting their clients in the end.  
22 For example, lawyers frequently engage in hostile letter  
23 writing campaigns which require enormous time and cost  
24 their clients enormous money, and they do little, if  
25 nothing, to resolve the dispute. This is now how I

1 practice law. I have been involved in numerous cases  
2 where I have worked with opposing counsel to achieve  
3 settlements in which both sides are pleased with the  
4 outcome. I am certain if you contacted all of the  
5 opposing counsel on the cases I've worked on during the  
6 past 10 years, they would tell you that, although I am a  
7 zealous advocate for my client, I am always cordial,  
8 honest, and a woman of great integrity.

9           One specific example was a lawsuit in which I  
10 represented a law firm being sued for malpractice. After  
11 several months of discovery, the parties agreed to go to  
12 mediation. The parties entered the mediation with vastly  
13 different positions and millions of dollars apart as to  
14 the amount required to settle the dispute. My role was to  
15 draft the mediation brief, present our case to the  
16 mediator, and work with opposing counsel to discuss our  
17 views. After 12 hours of mediation, we were finally able  
18 to find a resolution upon which both sides agreed.  
19 Consequently, the case settled without the need for a  
20 trial, my client was happy, and continues to use my law  
21 firm's services. And the opposing counsel referred a  
22 future case to me. To me, this is an excellent example  
23 that the litigation process can and will work for both  
24 sides.

25           I will take the skills I've gained and perfected



1 as a lawyer to help resolves conflicts that may arise  
2 among the Commissioners. I will not allow game playing,  
3 personality conflicts, or trivialities to steer me from  
4 the primary task at hand, which is to create Districts  
5 that will provide for the fair representation of all  
6 Californians. I will truly listen to my fellow  
7 Commissioners with an open mind. Also, I will learn that  
8 it helps to place yourself in the other person's shoes to  
9 truly understand their views of things. Sometimes we get  
10 so set in our own positions that we become deaf and blind  
11 to other views. I would step out of myself and into my  
12 fellow Commissioner's shoes to facilitate an understanding  
13 of conflicting positions and enable a compromise that may  
14 not otherwise have been discovered.

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's  
16 work impact the State? Which of these impacts will  
17 improve the State the most? Is there any potential for  
18 the Commission's work to harm the State, and if so, in  
19 what ways?

20 MS. SIMAS: I believe that the Commission's work  
21 has a potential to have a dramatic and a positive impact  
22 on the State. First, I believe that the Commission's work  
23 will increase public involvement in the redistricting  
24 process. The Commission's work will raise public  
25 awareness. Since this is a new process, there is an even

1 greater spotlight on redistricting. Hopefully, this  
2 greater involvement will lead to greater involvement in  
3 future elections to improve California's voter turnout.  
4 Public involvement has also increased because the Voters  
5 FIRST Act mandates that the redistricting process be open  
6 and transparent. The Commission must adhere to the  
7 Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. Consequently, the  
8 Commission will implement an open hearing process for  
9 public input, which will be promoted through outreach  
10 programs, to solicit broad public participation.

11           Second, if the Commission does its job well, all  
12 California citizens will have a greater voice. There  
13 likely will be better representation of Californians of  
14 all races, ethnicities, religions, and varying  
15 socioeconomic backgrounds. The Commission is likely to be  
16 more ethnically diverse than the Legislature's  
17 Redistricting Committees. Based on your work so far, it  
18 is likely that the racial and gender composition of the  
19 Commission will more accurately reflect California's  
20 diversity than the Legislative Committees. I believe a  
21 diverse Commission will increase the likelihood of  
22 creating districts that better represent all Californians.  
23 Additionally, the Voters FIRST Act expressly protects  
24 communities of interest by requiring that the districts  
25 comply with the Voting Rights Act, and ensuring that the

1 geographic integrity of cities, counties, and communities  
2 be respected. By respecting these communities, the  
3 Commission's work will likely ensure that voters have a  
4 greater political voice to demand that the issues  
5 important to them are addressed by the people they choose  
6 to elect.

7 Third and finally, I believe that the Districts  
8 work will lead to more competitive Districts. Although  
9 this is not an objective criteria of the Voters FIRST Act,  
10 it likely will occur in some areas of the State.

11 While I believe that the Commission's work will  
12 positively impact the State, it is important to recognize  
13 that there is a potential for the Commission's work to do  
14 harm. First, there may be legal challenges to the  
15 Commission's end product. Litigation would slow down the  
16 process and it is expensive; however, these same  
17 challenges do exist with regard to the Legislature's  
18 redistricting plans.

19 Second, if the Commissioners don't do their work  
20 properly and accurately, by which I mean they don't put in  
21 the necessary time and effort, or they operate based on  
22 impure motivations, the maps could end up being worse than  
23 what we have now. This likely would result in the public  
24 becoming more cynical and frustrated with the political  
25 process. Thirdly, if the Commissioners don't pay

1 attention to communities of interest, not all Californians  
2 voices will be heard in the manner in which the Voters  
3 FIRST Act intended. Although there is this potential for  
4 harm, I think it is very unlikely. The maps must pass  
5 with a quorum, which is defined as three Democrats, three  
6 Republicans, and three Independent Commissioners. Given  
7 this Panel's patient, scrupulous, and thorough work, I  
8 believe that the 14-person Commission will all be  
9 qualified and ultimately create districts that will  
10 benefit California.

11 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation where  
12 you have had to work as a part of a group to achieve a  
13 common goal, tell us about the goal, describe your role  
14 within the group, and tell us how the group worked or did  
15 not work collaboratively to achieve this goal. If you are  
16 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting  
17 Commission, tell us what you would do to foster  
18 collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure the  
19 Commission meets its legal deadlines.

20 MS. SIMAS: Throughout my life, I frequently  
21 worked as a part of a group to achieve a common goal.  
22 These groups involved various aspects of my life, such as  
23 being a member of my gymnastics Team for numerous years,  
24 being on the Student Council throughout High School, being  
25 a member of a sorority and a pre-law fraternity in

1 college, being part of charitable groups, and being a  
2 member of litigation trial teams throughout my tenure at  
3 the law firm. All of these groups worked to achieve  
4 common goals, such as winning California's Gymnastic State  
5 Championships, helping USD students to get into law  
6 schools, raising money to help Santa Monica's homeless  
7 population, and successfully resolving lengthy litigation.  
8 Consequently, I had a lot of difficulty selecting which  
9 group to discuss with you.

10 By far, the group that I was involved in, that I  
11 believe has had the largest impact on society as a whole,  
12 is to assist in the creation of UCSD's Safe Driving  
13 Program, which continues to exist today. It is a free  
14 service for students to call when they need a safe ride  
15 home. If you want, I will discuss this more with you  
16 later in the interview, however, the group that probably  
17 most resembles the Redistricting Commission's work is  
18 being part of a trial team. For that reason, I will  
19 expand upon a specific experience involving a trial in  
20 Victorville, California.

21 Although the majority of lawsuits settle, this one  
22 did not. After a year of discovery, law and motion, and  
23 mediation, it was clear that we were going the distance.  
24 The trial team consisted of five members, two partners, a  
25 paralegal, a litigation consultant, and myself. As the

1 Junior Attorney, I was the person who kept track of all  
2 the deadlines and made sure that everything was proceeding  
3 as planned. The behind-the-scenes work for preparing and  
4 trying a case is enormous. The pre-trial work, alone,  
5 includes prepping witnesses, reviewing deposition  
6 transcripts, drafting motions in limine, putting together  
7 exhibit lists, preparing for voir dire, drafting directing  
8 and cross examinations, and the list goes on and on. Once  
9 the pre-work is finished, the five of us headed to  
10 Victorville, California, where we tried our case for two  
11 weeks. We were in the courtroom from 9:00 to 5:00 and we  
12 worked through the nights preparing for the next day's  
13 testimony, and tinkering with our game plan as we went  
14 along.

15 In addition to the legal work, our client was also  
16 unique. She was born and raised in Korea and, as a  
17 result, had a difficult time with English. Although she  
18 was extremely intelligent and a very successful realtor,  
19 she felt completely insecure about being involved in this  
20 lawsuit. Because I was the only female on the trial team,  
21 she felt comfortable confiding in me about her concerns,  
22 so I learned the importance of taking off my lawyer hat  
23 and acting more as a therapist to help her through this  
24 trial. Although the trial was an exhausting experience,  
25 it honestly was one of the highlights of my life. I grew

1 so close to the group and I became a much better trial  
2 lawyer. The icing on the cake was that we won the case  
3 and that our client was extremely happy.

4 I would bring this group trial experience, as well  
5 as the other experience I have gained by working in  
6 groups, to the Redistricting Commission. Throughout these  
7 experiences, I have learned the importance of listening to  
8 all members' views, setting many deadlines to ensure that  
9 you achieve the ultimate goal, doing my personal best,  
10 while simultaneously encouraging other members to do their  
11 best, and having a little fun while going through the  
12 process.

13 As for meeting deadlines, throughout my litigation  
14 career, I've never missed one. As one partner describes  
15 me, I'm that kid in school who gets the next semester's  
16 reading list and shows up on the first day having  
17 completed the entire list. My nature is to always be  
18 prepared and to stay on top of everything, to make sure  
19 that the tasks are completed and completed well. You can  
20 see by the timestamp on my Supplemental Application that I  
21 submitted it several weeks before the deadline. An innate  
22 trait of mine is to never procrastinate and to always be  
23 prepared.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of  
25 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people

1 from all over California who come from very different  
2 backgrounds and very different perspectives. If you are  
3 selected to serve on the Commission, tell us about the  
4 specific skills you possess that will make you effective  
5 in interacting with the public.

6 MS. SIMAS: I believe that one of my greatest  
7 strengths is the ability to relate to all types of people.  
8 I was born and raised in Stockton, and have lived  
9 throughout the State. Growing up in Stockton and working  
10 in my family's restaurant exposed me to all races, creeds,  
11 and economic classes. I've traveled and lived throughout  
12 the State, so I am familiar with various geographical  
13 perspectives. During my years in gymnastics, I would be  
14 in different California cities many weekends. The  
15 remainder of my weekends were usually spent in Santa Cruz,  
16 or at my grandparents' home in Ripon. I now live in  
17 Southern California, but frequently visit my family who  
18 live in the Central Valley in Northern California. Beyond  
19 geographical knowledge, I've had exposure to all walks of  
20 life. I think I am very unique in that, throughout my  
21 life, I've not only interacted with, but I am close  
22 friends with people of all races, creeds, and  
23 socioeconomic levels. Although I am a Catholic female,  
24 the office of my law firm is predominantly Jewish and  
25 male. In this environment, I've had the opportunity to



1 become close friends with people who have different  
2 backgrounds and perspectives from my own.

3           Outside of work, I also am exposed to various  
4 backgrounds. I am a member of Santa Monica's Vibrant Yoga  
5 community, which has enabled me to meet all types of  
6 people from a variety of occupations and religions. I  
7 have worked closely with the owners of my Yoga Studio to  
8 plan charity events in support of the homeless. For  
9 example, in June we had a fundraiser to raise money for  
10 the Ocean Park Community Center, which is Santa Monica's  
11 foremost homeless services organization. Throughout this  
12 and similar events, I've made friends with many of Santa  
13 Monica's homeless population and I understand their  
14 perspective.

15           My exposure to different backgrounds extends well  
16 beyond California. I traveled extensively outside the  
17 United States, including throughout Europe, Mexico, Costa  
18 Rica, Guatemala, Vietnam and Cambodia. Given my  
19 background and my experiences, I have developed skills  
20 that will be necessary when interacting with the public.  
21 Because of my legal training, I have developed skills such  
22 as listening skills, the ability to be objective and non-  
23 judgmental, the ability to think quickly on my feet, and  
24 the ability to ask relevant and probative questions. I  
25 have spoken on legal panels, at public conferences, and

1 feel quite comfortable in this capacity.

2 In addition to the skills I've gained from my  
3 career, my lifetime experiences have provided me with  
4 skills such as being empathetic to other situations,  
5 understanding that every individual has something to teach  
6 me, respecting people's opinions regardless if they differ  
7 from my own, and being comfortable with communicating with  
8 people from all walks of life. I am a people person and I  
9 genuinely enjoy meeting people from different backgrounds  
10 and with different perspectives.

11 Finally, I believe a skill that I possess is an  
12 ability to put others at ease, to feel comfortable  
13 interacting with me. I understand the importance of  
14 taking off my lawyer hat and relating to someone who is  
15 uneducated, or who is nervous about testifying before a  
16 committee. I would hope that I could assist anyone and  
17 everyone in making their interactions with the Commission  
18 a positive and beneficial experience.

19 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Mr. Ahmadi.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. Good afternoon, Ms.  
21 Simas.

22 MS. SIMAS: Good afternoon, Mr. Ahmadi.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: In response to question 1, you  
24 mentioned that, if time allows, you would like to share  
25 some information about the impartiality.

1 MS. SIMAS: Oh, yes.

2 CHAIR AHMADI: How much time do you need?

3 MS. SIMAS: Just maybe 45 seconds to a minute.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Why don't you go ahead and start  
5 with that.

6 MS. SIMAS: Okay, I just wanted to expand on that  
7 portion because there is an experience I had when I was  
8 first taking my very first deposition, and I walked into  
9 the conference room, and the man there proceeds to give me  
10 his business card and starts telling me a bunch of  
11 information that you would typically tell a Court  
12 Reporter. So, I politely looked at him and I said, "You  
13 know, actually I am your opposing counsel and I will be  
14 taking the deposition today." And he got a little  
15 embarrassed and I said, "It's no big deal, don't worry  
16 about it." But what that experience impressed upon me is  
17 that many people, and it's perfectly natural to do this,  
18 but they will see someone and immediately inform snap  
19 judgments about that person, prior to getting a lot of  
20 knowledge about them. And so, now I make a very  
21 conscientious effort to, when I meet someone, to actually  
22 take the time to figure out who this person is and what  
23 information they can provide. And a little bit more along  
24 that line, and I have seen a few of these interviews and  
25 understand that some people do have their ideas about how

1 the Districts will ultimately be laid out, they will say,  
2 "Well, this might happen, and this might happen," and I  
3 think it's imperative that we not rush to any sort of  
4 judgment, we must listen to all the public testimony and,  
5 you know, perhaps do surveys and that sort of thing to get  
6 all the information, and then, when the Census Data comes  
7 out around April 1<sup>st</sup>, then we will use that information and  
8 to actually determine how the Districts should be decided,  
9 rather than any rush to prejudgment.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you so much.

11 MS. SIMAS: You are welcome.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: I also have a follow-up question on  
13 your response to question 5. You mentioned that, in  
14 addition to traveling throughout California, you also had  
15 opportunity to travel to different countries overseas.  
16 What value does that experience bring to the Commission,  
17 should you be selected as a Commissioner?

18 MS. SIMAS: Oh, I think it is amazing. I actually  
19 went to Vietnam and Cambodia was the most recent  
20 international travel I've done, which was in April. And  
21 to see the - when we see the poor here, and they are poor,  
22 you have a totally different perspective of what it means  
23 to be poor when you see these Cambodian, particularly  
24 children, I have never seen anything like it, and I think,  
25 unless you've actually experienced it, it's impossible to,

1 in pictures, or to explain to people, how different their  
2 lifestyles are. And I think having that knowledge and  
3 meeting other people throughout the State is extremely  
4 beneficial. The bottom line, though, at the end of the  
5 day, people generally are the same; I mean, they want the  
6 same things from life, but it's just that having the  
7 exposure of different poverty levels and just beyond the  
8 United States is helpful.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you so much. In your  
10 application, I have a few questions based on the material  
11 in your application. You refer, in response to the  
12 impartiality essay, or as part of the essay for  
13 impartiality, you make a reference to your experience  
14 working as a Legislative Intern back in '92-'93.

15 MS. SIMAS: Yes.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: And you say that experience made  
17 you aware of how partisan the Legislature is. Could you  
18 tell us a little more about that?

19 MS. SIMAS: Okay, well, I can tell you, my first  
20 day I showed up, and this was - I interned for my local  
21 Assemblyperson at that time, and I showed up for the first  
22 day of work, and one of his aids hands me the copy key,  
23 and so he looks at me dead in the face and says, "Whatever  
24 you do, do not lose this copy key because the Democrats  
25 might want to steal the key and use it to run up costs

1 on...," and this goes on both sides, I'm not blaming the  
2 Democrats, and I'm not blaming the Republicans, I'm simply  
3 saying that when someone is telling me this, and he was -  
4 this aid was in his 40's or 50's years old, and here I am,  
5 I was 18-years-old, thinking, "Is this the level of  
6 maturity that we are dealing with here?" I mean, we're  
7 concerned with, you know, stealing one another's copy  
8 keys, and I just saw the process, and it's not that it  
9 doesn't work, it's just that sometimes people get caught  
10 up on in petty things that don't matter, and it takes them  
11 away from what truly are the important issues. So, I just  
12 wish that people could get along a little bit better and  
13 maybe we'd have a budget, as well.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: So this copy key, is this like a  
15 key to information that is being -

16 MS. SIMAS: Oh, the photo copy key. So what  
17 happens is you're given this key, and you insert the key  
18 into the copier, and you make a lot of copies. But it  
19 runs up costs. So the Republican Party then pays back  
20 that, but if you lose it and a Democrat were to get the  
21 copy key, it could run up an enormous tab and the  
22 Republicans will be paying for it. So, things like that  
23 go on behind the scenes that a lot of people are probably  
24 unaware of.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: So that's what you meant by

1 becoming aware of how partisan they -

2 MS. SIMAS: Yeah, I just thought that struck me as  
3 extremely, a little bit on the immature side, and not  
4 focused on what truly matters.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you. Are you happy  
6 with your current District lines? Why or why not?

7 MS. SIMAS: I - well, that's a difficult question  
8 to answer, again, without --

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Sorry.

10 MS. SIMAS: -- well, because I don't want to form  
11 any - I don't want to prejudge what might ultimately  
12 happen, having not seen the information, and listened to  
13 public testimony. But I think there has to be almost  
14 unanimous consent that there are problems with the  
15 District lines, that some areas have a greater number of  
16 legislators than they should have, and other areas are  
17 underserved. So, in that respect, I think there is room  
18 for improvement.

19 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thanks again. In your  
20 application, you also mentioned that you are a skilled  
21 questioner. What values does that bring? How would that  
22 skill help you, should you become a Commissioner?

23 MS. SIMAS: Well, at the risk of sounding like I'm  
24 brownnosing you, I think that you're actually a skilled  
25 questioner, as well. I think it's imperative that a

1 person is able to listen to someone else, and really key  
2 in on what information is important to ask because  
3 sometimes, if you lack that ability, you could get  
4 sidetracked talking about, you know, gymnastics, what kind  
5 of tricks were you doing, you know, in the fourth grade,  
6 as opposed to what actually matters to the task at hand  
7 here. So, I think I have the ability to succinctly  
8 develop questions that get to the hearts of issues that  
9 matter.

10 CHAIR AHMADI: What kind of questions do you think  
11 might help achieve the optimum result being, you know, the  
12 information that you need for the redistricting, when you  
13 are faced with, for example, a community? What kind of  
14 questions would help you - or generate, you know, the type  
15 of responses that you think are most crucial?

16 MS. SIMAS: Well, I think there are lots of ways  
17 I've thought about going about this and I think, during  
18 the public testimony, that will be a lot of listening, you  
19 know, the Bagley-Keene Act Opening Meeting Act allows  
20 people the opportunity to express their viewpoints. But  
21 as far as questioning goes, I actually had pondered the  
22 idea of getting out to the communities and speaking with  
23 civic activists and community activists, and asking them,  
24 now, what is it about this community? Tell me about the  
25 racial makeup, tell me about what issues are they



1 interested in, education? Or water policy? Is this a  
2 farming community? Is this an industrial community? And  
3 so really getting to the people who know about that  
4 community, finding out, you know, the religious makeup,  
5 that sort of thing.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you. One important  
7 aspect of the Commission's work will be to get information  
8 from the public, as you mentioned right now. And if you  
9 can be more specific in terms of, you know, the steps that  
10 you would suggest to ensure that you're having an  
11 effective community outreach, what would that be?

12 MS. SIMAS: Okay, well, first, I mean, the  
13 WeDrawTheLines website is fantastic, and so I would first  
14 try to develop a very large Web presence and, also, it's  
15 difficult to predict whether or not the 14-person  
16 Commission is going to be traveling all together, or being  
17 divided into different groups and going canvassing up and  
18 down the State to actually get out into the communities.  
19 But, as far as getting public testimony, I think it's  
20 imperative that, at the very beginning, once the 14-person  
21 Commission is put together, that we sit down and we  
22 establish guideline that, you know, are we going to be  
23 accepting maps from outside groups? Are we going to have  
24 meetings? All our meetings will be public and, as soon as  
25 we can, to let people know when we will be having these

1 meetings, where we will be having them, whether or not  
2 we're going to be having virtual meetings because not  
3 everyone will have access, you know, transportation  
4 access, to get to where our meetings are. A lot of local  
5 libraries have free Internet service, so that's a way to  
6 get the information out that we'll be holding these  
7 meetings and we would like to get your input. There is  
8 also, you know, we could do surveys, questioning people  
9 about the community, and I'm not sure if - you probably  
10 are aware of like the American Community Survey, which  
11 exists, it is a random sampling that sometimes exists  
12 throughout the 10 years of a Census. I think that  
13 information will help us determine which way to go forward  
14 in different communities.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you. You mentioned  
16 that you have traveled throughout California as part of  
17 your life experiences and working at Gymnastics and all  
18 that. If you compare a rural area within California, with  
19 a more densely populated area, what are some of the  
20 similarities or differences that you see?

21 MS. SIMAS: There's a lot of differences. I did  
22 spend a lot of time in Ripon, and they were great years  
23 with my grandparents, and life is a little bit slower  
24 there, and tends to be a little friendlier, and you walk  
25 into a store and they say hello, and they genuinely - not

1 to say that, you know, urban areas are less concerned  
2 about family, but I think they have a great appreciation  
3 of spending quality time with their family members, and  
4 their issues that they're concerned about are different.  
5 They tend to be more focused on farming issues, whereas,  
6 when you get into the cities, you have different issues.  
7 You have issues concerning gangs or, you know, education,  
8 transportation, so there's a just an issue in issues.  
9 But, again, I do think that, all in all, that people  
10 remain the same, they just want to have good family, a  
11 happy life, whether it be in the city or in the rural  
12 areas.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: What else do you see in common?

14 MS. SIMAS: In common? The desire for, you know,  
15 to have a family, most people, to have a family, to have  
16 kids that can go to good schools, you know, and just a  
17 good transportation system, and a government that works.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you so much. How much  
19 time do we have? Okay, no questions at this point.

20 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. Hello, Ms. Simas.

22 MS. SIMAS: Hi, it's Simas.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Oh, it's Simas.

24 MS. SIMAS: No problem.

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Usually they give me cards,

1 but this time they didn't. It sounds like you've been  
2 really busy. I see in one of the comments - or, not the  
3 comments, but one of the information that we received, and  
4 your employment history, your taking some time off to  
5 travel, and to interact with your family more. What do  
6 you plan on doing when you do go back to the workforce?

7 MS. SIMAS: Well, there is the opportunity to go  
8 back to the law firm, that is one thing I'm pondering, but  
9 I really am taking this time to figure out and then, out  
10 of the blue, this came up, so it is serendipitous, but I  
11 really am taking the time to figure out exactly what I  
12 want to do with the rest of my life and I think that,  
13 often times, particularly in the law firm life, when  
14 you're working 60 hours a week, you lose sight of actually  
15 what is important, and then you wake up a 35-years-old and  
16 you're, "Well, this might not exactly be where I want to  
17 be for the rest of my life," so that's kind of what the  
18 awakening I arrived at, and I just decided I need to take  
19 a break and figure out exactly what I want to do. As to  
20 what that is, I'm still discovering it, but I think in due  
21 time it will all become more clear. But the traveling has  
22 been fantastic and I actually am a - or was a proud owner  
23 of a dog that I spent a lot of time with, he passed away  
24 two weeks ago, so it's been rather traumatic, the last  
25 couple of weeks, but I got to spend a lot of time with him

1 and my family, which I think is just timeless.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: From your classes at UCSD's  
3 Marshall's College, what influence did they have on your  
4 taste for politics?

5 MS. SIMAS: Well, I've always been interested in  
6 political science and, from a young age, I knew I wanted  
7 to be a lawyer. So, they have -- I think I described in  
8 my application a program called Dimensions of Culture,  
9 which is actually - each college at UCSD has - there are  
10 five different colleges, there might even be six now, but  
11 at the time there were five, and they have a specific  
12 writing program geared towards that college, and this  
13 college gears its program towards diversity, imagination,  
14 and justice. So, most of the readings were focused on  
15 those areas, and then we would write essays and term  
16 papers based on those subjects. So I've just always been  
17 interested, particularly the Justice aspect.

18 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, you were in the  
19 Marshall's College section?

20 MS. SIMAS: Uh huh.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And you said they had a  
22 diversity aspect.

23 MS. SIMAS: Yes. In fact, I don't know if you  
24 need to know, but I was actually - I wanted to see if I  
25 knew any of the Applicants that had made it to the

1 interview part, and I saw Professor Saito, who - this  
2 makes me sound really young, but he was actually there as  
3 a professor - he wasn't my professor, but he was there at  
4 Ethnic Studies when I was at Thurgood Marshall College, so  
5 I was familiar with him, I thought that was funny.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Oh, pretty interesting. So  
7 you didn't take any classes from him. Did you take any  
8 classes from any other Ethnic Studies that helped you  
9 further understand?

10 MS. SIMAS: Yes, I took gender studies. I took  
11 Gay and Lesbian Politics. I took African-American  
12 Studies. I think as far - I did take Ethnic Studies, just  
13 not with him. And then I took Women and the Law, which is  
14 a whole other topic, but - along the same lines, the  
15 guidelines of being diverse.

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, what has that taught you  
17 where you could attribute or help bring to the Commission?

18 MS. SIMAS: Well, I think that being exposed to  
19 that information, you have, again, an entirely different  
20 perspective than if you don't have that knowledge. For  
21 example, most people don't realize, *Am Law* does a study  
22 every year, it's a law journal that actually keeps  
23 statistics, and it came out last week and there are 17  
24 percent women partners in law firms, and I think most  
25 people would be shocked by that because you think, oh, you

1 know, they may not expect it to be as equal with men, but  
2 17 percent is an extremely low rate, particularly given  
3 the fact that female law students are -- 52 percent of the  
4 nation's law schools are female, so that just - that  
5 class, in particular, gave me a spotlight and there are  
6 issues as to why women aren't raising up through the ranks  
7 in law firms; and, similarly, you learn more about, you  
8 know, gay and lesbian politics, that is an area that I was  
9 completely unfamiliar with, so I wanted to learn more  
10 about gay and lesbian issues, and the Stonewall Movement  
11 up to modern day, and so, without that education, I  
12 wouldn't know anything about that, that lifestyle.

13 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, how would that knowledge  
14 that you gained there help you as a Commissioner?

15 MS. SIMAS: Well, I think that the more knowledge  
16 you have, the greater capacity you have, when you are  
17 sitting down to create the District lines, and you are  
18 meeting with these communities of interest, you can better  
19 empathize and understand their perspective of things.  
20 Because, if you were never exposed to gay and lesbian  
21 issues, and then you go to West Hollywood, for example,  
22 and you sit down and you talk to someone and they are  
23 telling you things you may not have the same insights as  
24 someone that actually understands the issue and their  
25 concerns, not that they all have the same kinds of

1 concerns, but, you know, you'll be better able to relate  
2 to all walks of life with a greater understanding of all  
3 walks of life. Does that make sense?

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Yep. I noticed in your  
5 application that the law firm that you worked at was named  
6 as one of the top 100 law firms for diversity and one of  
7 the top law firms for women.

8 MS. SIMAS: Correct.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Can you elaborate on that?  
10 Because I also see, and you also stated, that it was a  
11 predominantly Jewish male law firm.

12 MS. SIMAS: Yeah, my office, in particular. The  
13 Santa Monica Office is predominantly Jewish and male and  
14 the law firm as a whole has - and this is the award, it  
15 has 30 percent women, so it is still completely  
16 underrepresented, but they are making great efforts to  
17 expand both, you know, racial, ethnic, and gender, and gay  
18 and lesbian community outreach. I was on the Diversity  
19 Committee of my law firm and we planned many events, we  
20 always celebrated Black History Month and Latino History  
21 Month, we put on diversity lunches at our law firm's  
22 office to have a greater understanding of different  
23 cultural backgrounds, and then, monthly, we would have the  
24 LA Offices which is comprised of Los Angeles, the Orange  
25 County Office, as well, and Santa Monica, we would all get



1 together and we would have a Diversity Night Dinner, so we  
2 had a staff secretary who was Cantonese, so we had, "Yes,  
3 We Canton Night," and different things like that. And not  
4 only did you get exposed to more diversity, but it  
5 actually made you closer with your colleagues and the  
6 staff working at the firm, you felt more like a family  
7 because you would hang out together while simultaneously  
8 learning about diversity.

9 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So this was kind of a  
10 building - a teamwork type of building?

11 MS. SIMAS: Yeah, the firm is actually based out  
12 of Boston, so there is a Diversity Committee, and they  
13 have chairs in each office, and so these Chairs actually  
14 plan events in their office, as well as, for example, one  
15 of the things they do is they have a Howard University  
16 Fellowship Scholarship. So, a first year student at  
17 Howard Law gets a \$10,000 a year grant each year as a  
18 scholarship to hopefully encourage, and then he or she can  
19 go on to work in Bingham's Office for the summer, to try  
20 to get a more African-American presence in the law firm;  
21 and just different things like that to promote diversity  
22 and that is why their numbers, although still low, are  
23 better than most of the law firms that exist.

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, you were part of this  
25 diversity. Did you help out with some of these outreach

1 efforts?

2 MS. SIMAS: Yeah, that is what the lunches and the  
3 dinners, in particular, is divided and there is also - we  
4 planned a LGBT retreat, which all of the LGBT across the  
5 firm-wide, they attended that retreat. It was actually in  
6 San Francisco. And then I was a part of planning a big  
7 Gay Pride Parade. What else did I do? Oh, I instituted a  
8 Women's Mentoring Program because, like I explained, it is  
9 interesting that women tend to flee law firms often, I  
10 mean, it's very rare to see women past the age of 30 in a  
11 law firm environment, so I was trying to create something  
12 that would try to keep women there longer, whether it is  
13 they need greater family time, you know, family leave, or  
14 part time possibilities, that sort of thing, so we created  
15 a Women's Mentoring Program so that, when incoming Summer  
16 Associates come in, they would be paired with a female  
17 mentor to work with them throughout the rest of their - as  
18 long as they were at that firm.

19 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, when you were saying -  
20 and this could have been my confusion - when you were  
21 saying across the firm, it is an outreach effort that the  
22 firm did to the community, it wasn't -

23 MS. SIMAS: No, it was within the firm to make  
24 sure - because the firm's belief, as is my own, is that if  
25 you have a more diverse firm, it will lead to a more

1 competent and a better law firm; similarly, the same being  
2 as having a more diverse Commission, because if you have  
3 more perspectives, when you meet with clients and you are  
4 trying to attract future clients, it is good to have a  
5 good diverse group of lawyers. For example, when I was  
6 explaining about the case that involved Ms. Song in  
7 Victorville, California, it was really wonderful that  
8 there was a female lawyer on the team, because I can  
9 guarantee you, she would not have expressed her emotions  
10 to the two male senior partners on the trial team in the  
11 same way, and I think that is similar, you know, for  
12 example, if you are African-American, and you are dealing  
13 with a race discrimination case, and maybe it would be  
14 easier for that person to confide with an African-American  
15 lawyer. I mean, I can't speak for everyone, but I think  
16 it just sometimes makes it easier to have a very diverse  
17 group of lawyers that clients and other people can turn  
18 to.

19 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, when you were saying  
20 "across the firm," you were saying that you were trying to  
21 reach out to the public to bring these people in?

22 MS. SIMAS: Well, there are different - the  
23 Diversity Committee, it is a committee that exists within  
24 Bingham, McCutcheon, as a whole. And so, the events that  
25 we plan, the lunches and the dinners, and that sort of

1    thing, that's within the firm, but then they also do a  
2    community outreach with respect to the Howard - one  
3    example is the Howard University Scholarship, that is  
4    outside of Bingham; and so, they make efforts to bring in  
5    future lawyers outside, as well as to create a very  
6    diverse and a great appreciation for diversity within the  
7    firm itself.

8               VICE CHAIR CAMACHO:   Okay, so it is internal and  
9    then external, also.

10              MS. SIMAS:   Yes.

11              VICE CHAIR CAMACHO:   In your application, you talk  
12    about some volunteer work that you did at St. Monica's  
13    Church.   Could you summarize your role in this volunteer  
14    activity and others that reached out to the  
15    underrepresented?

16              MS. SIMAS:   Yes.   That work primarily, again, is  
17    with the homeless, and I have not done as much - that was  
18    recently, but more recently was the Yoga work that I've  
19    been doing.   But it is similar.   It is working with -  
20    Santa Monica, until recently, which is exciting news, the  
21    homeless population has been growing the last couple of  
22    years, so when you live there every day, that is, again,  
23    going back to understanding a community; when you live  
24    there, you recognize that it is a serious problem, you  
25    interact with these people every day, and many of them are

1 just down on their luck. Several of them are, you know,  
2 they have mental problems or they are involved with - they  
3 are addicted to drugs, so these people really do need  
4 help. And so, I started work - there is a homeless  
5 program through our Church that goes out, helps the needy,  
6 they feed them, you know, Thanksgiving Dinner, they bring  
7 clothes and do food and clothing drives, and that sort of  
8 thing. But because I became more passionate about the  
9 issue and because I've had this time off, I am very close  
10 friends with the owners of my Yoga Studio, and so I  
11 brought this issue to them and I explained, look, you  
12 know, especially during these hard hit times, the  
13 population, we really should try to do something, I mean,  
14 Yoga is all about, you know, being one, and we are all  
15 part of the same consciousness, and that sort of thing, so  
16 I said, you know, "We need to help these people." And so  
17 we developed - our main charity is the Ocean Park  
18 Community Center, which is in Santa Monica, and it helps  
19 the homeless, and they do - they have a variety of  
20 programs, and these programs include help, whether it is  
21 drug rehab, or they have a lot of beds, and they've  
22 increased the number of beds because we've raised  
23 thousands and thousands of dollars to give to the  
24 Community Park Center.

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. Okay, can you

1 elaborate on how you learned to set aside your personal  
2 interest by taking courses in Interest Group Politics,  
3 Urban Politics, and Race in Politics?

4 MS. SIMAS: I think that is similar to the  
5 question of how you've - what have you learned from taking  
6 the other classes with Races. Again, it is just  
7 understanding - one of - the Interest Group Politics, you  
8 know, it laid out - this is hard because this is back in  
9 college, but it goes into different interest groups that  
10 exist, what their motivations are, that sort of thing, and  
11 having that information, and knowing that such interest  
12 groups exist, and the importance of trying to build  
13 coalitions with the groups together, I think, is a helpful  
14 skill to have.

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So that has helped you to put  
16 aside what you thought and what you learned, or any other  
17 conceived notion to be able to interact with different  
18 individuals?

19 MS. SIMAS: Yes, most definitely. Yeah, in fact,  
20 within the Interest Group Politics, my professor was  
21 Professor Gerber, and that's - I went on with her to  
22 actually work on a seminar, I think I discussed how we did  
23 - there was a book that she ultimately ended up writing,  
24 and we actually went out, we drafted a survey and sent it  
25 out to thousands of organizations, interest groups from

1 the Tobacco Industry, the Insurance Industry, like Unions,  
2 the Nursing Union, those sorts of things, and we sent out  
3 these surveys and we analyzed finance campaign records to  
4 learn, you know, how these different interest groups and  
5 organizations spend their money and particularly with  
6 regard to direct legislation, which is interesting since  
7 that is what has brought us here today. And the typical  
8 belief is that big interest groups are able to actually  
9 control the initiative process, but after we received all  
10 the data and we did all the work, her book ultimately  
11 concludes that that, in fact, is not the case, that  
12 although they can spend a lot of money, if the citizens at  
13 the end of the day don't want what they're trying to spend  
14 the money on, you know, they will not get what they want.  
15 So, it is a fascinating book, I highly recommend it.  
16 Let's hope that it comes through and that we can keep this  
17 initiative going.

18 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. That was my last  
19 question.

20 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good afternoon.

22 MS. SIMAS: Good afternoon.

23 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Would you like to drink some  
24 water?

25 MS. SIMAS: Oh, I'm okay. Thanks.

1           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You mentioned in your  
2 application in your analytical section that you had an  
3 unusually high LSAT score in analytical reason, as well as  
4 the LSAT --

5           MS. SIMAS: Now you make me sound pompous.

6           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Well, you mentioned it, so....

7           MS. SIMAS: I know, but it was an application.

8           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you tell us a little bit  
9 about that overall in analytics, that unusually high  
10 score?

11          MS. SIMAS: Yeah, well, the LSAT is divided into  
12 three sections, you have the reading comprehension  
13 section, the analytical section, and logical reasoning.  
14 And I'm not going to reveal my score, but it was very  
15 high, so I was just trying to think of ways to impress  
16 upon you that I do, in fact, have great analytical skills.  
17 My brain tends to think very - I'm very into reason and  
18 not very creative.

19          PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Like logic?

20          MS. SIMAS: Yeah, that's how I think, yeah.

21          PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. You mentioned Yoga  
22 earlier and in your application, you said another social  
23 activity that might prove helpful while serving as a  
24 Commissioner is Yoga. And you practice this a lot. Would  
25 you - how important is this to you in maintaining that and



1 to the other Commissioners?

2 MS. SIMAS: Well, I think this Commission is going  
3 to be very stressful. I don't think that people  
4 understand the amount of work that is going to be  
5 required, and I honestly - when I said I spent numerous  
6 hours, I mean, I've read case law, various Supreme Court  
7 Decisions, I reviewed Maptitude, and redistricting issues,  
8 I've read articles, you know, there is the Brennan Law  
9 Center, the Rose Institute, MALDEF, all of these different  
10 organizations, I've taken the time to really study this  
11 issue in depth and it is ginormous [sic]. I understand  
12 the Legislators' concern that, how is this 14-person panel  
13 going to be able to truly get up to speed and conquer this  
14 enormous task when they are just 14 people off the street?  
15 So, I think that once the eight are selected that they are  
16 going to be quickly, hopefully, brought up to speed, the  
17 Bagley-Keene Act, the Roberts Rules of Order, case law,  
18 the Voting Rights Act, that sort of thing, and it is going  
19 to require a lot of information coming in, and a lot of  
20 traveling and there will be times when you may have to  
21 pull an all-nighter, it is going to be stressful. And  
22 Yoga is my way of getting through it all. So, just  
23 breathe!

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You said you researched  
25 extensively so far, I know you're not an expert on the VRA

1 or anything, but so far, from a legal perspective, what  
2 are the challenges that you see in applying this law in  
3 drawing the lines?

4 MS. SIMAS: Well, some of the law is clear cut.  
5 There is the Thornburg v. Gingles case which lays out the  
6 three elements that are necessary to prove a section to  
7 violation of the Voting Rights Act, and that's pretty  
8 clear; but then there's subsequent law that could be  
9 argued either way, and so I think that, even if you have  
10 the lawyers, as always that, you know, that will tell you  
11 one thing, that there will be differences of opinion, as  
12 well, although I do recognize that the lawyer chosen, you  
13 know, will require - the Commissioners are required to  
14 select staff, including a lawyer, and that lawyer chosen  
15 is the ultimate decider - that is, I'm the client, and if  
16 I were a Commissioner, I do understand that.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay.

18 MS. SIMAS: Okay.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What skills and abilities do  
20 you want to see in a solid attorney to help out with the  
21 Commission?

22 MS. SIMAS: Someone that is open-minded and is  
23 willing to listen to the counsel that is, in fact, hired,  
24 because that is their purpose is to advise us as to what  
25 they think of the lines; someone that has had - I mean, I

1 think the advantage of having worked in a law firm is that  
2 it is a very intense environment, and so I think someone  
3 who is experienced working long hours and drafted a lot of  
4 - done a lot of law and motion work, as well as been in  
5 and out of the courtroom a lot, is helpful, too.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What kind of legal challenges  
7 do you think the Commission will face with the maps?

8 MS. SIMAS: Well, after having reviewed how many  
9 interest groups are truly invested in this, I think the  
10 biggest challenge is going to obviously be getting these  
11 groups to understand that this is what we believe to be  
12 fair. But I've also thought that we could - the  
13 Commissioners could have test maps, for example, the  
14 deadline is September 15<sup>th</sup>, so, in addition to welcoming  
15 everyone's ideas, you know, you are allowed to submit your  
16 own map, we could have a deadline perhaps, you know, a  
17 month or two before of actually having the final three  
18 maps finished, so that, then, afterwards, to stave off any  
19 potential litigation, we could get all of these groups'  
20 input on what they think about the maps that we ultimately  
21 will be submitting on September 15<sup>th</sup>, so then they will  
22 say, "Well, okay, we think this is almost right, but with  
23 just a little tinkering here," instead of just coming on  
24 September 15<sup>th</sup>, "Here are the three maps," then, I think,  
25 there could be a lot of issues.

1 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Without getting input and  
2 soliciting upfront?

3 MS. SIMAS: Uh huh.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Let's talk to your work at  
5 Bingham, McCutcheon.

6 MS. SIMAS: Uh huh.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You mentioned, I believe,  
8 your trial case was with them in your example. What other  
9 types of cases have you handled?

10 MS. SIMAS: Well, that was a real estate dispute.  
11 It was a real property transaction, a multi-million dollar  
12 deal, but I've also done a lot in the insurance arena.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Insurance?

14 MS. SIMAS: Yeah, but I've done a lot of  
15 entertainment work, a lot of insurance litigation, a lot  
16 of employment litigation. I mentioned in my opening legal  
17 malpractice. My favorite case, I probably shouldn't say  
18 this on the record, but one of my favorite cases is we  
19 represented Dannon, the Yogurt company, and they were  
20 being sued for misrepresentation with regard to their  
21 probiotic - their yogurt products, I don't know if you've  
22 heard of Danactive, I don't know if you're familiar with  
23 it, but that actually involved a great amount of learning  
24 the science that substantiates the - supports that  
25 probiotics are, in fact, healthy for your body, and it is

1 just a complete area that I had no knowledge of before.

2 So, that case ultimately settled.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Did it?

4 MS. SIMAS: Uh huh. It was a class-action. I do  
5 a lot of class-action work.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay, is that what you mean  
7 by complex litigation?

8 MS. SIMAS: Yeah. A lot of defense of class  
9 actions in the consumer arena, but I've also worked on the  
10 plaintiff side, as well. The lawsuit in Victorville was  
11 on a plaintiff.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You said this was your  
13 favorite case?

14 MS. SIMAS: Yeah, first of all, it was very long,  
15 so it was one of those that you really get in-depth with,  
16 and the parent is Denon, who is in France, so we - well,  
17 the Partner went to France a lot, but they also came out  
18 here a lot, and I met with a lot of their scientists.  
19 They have a complete laboratory regarding their yogurt  
20 products, and I studied all about probiotics, got into the  
21 nutrition of it, and how it works, and then I took a lot  
22 of depositions in that case, which I enjoy taking  
23 depositions, so...

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Of experts? Scientists?

25 MS. SIMAS: Experts, as well as the lead

1 plaintiff, who was filing the - the class representative,  
2 as they are known in the legal world.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Was this case successful, the  
4 outcome?

5 MS. SIMAS: I think the client is pleased, but, I  
6 mean, any time - typically when you are a Defendant, it is  
7 hard to say that it was successful because you just don't  
8 want to be in a lawsuit at all, but it was - we did settle  
9 it and, you know, the class action - the plaintiffs got  
10 what they wanted and we got what we wanted, so, yeah, it  
11 was successful, but it was a lot of money on both sides.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Probably not as much as  
13 trial, right?

14 MS. SIMAS: No, and that's the point is you kind  
15 of want to avoid that. I also did a case involving the  
16 illegal downloading of MP3, I don't know if you're - yeah,  
17 so that was an interesting case, too.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Total different area of the  
19 law for you?

20 MS. SIMAS: Uh huh. Yeah, in a law firm  
21 environment, you're exposed, particularly when you're  
22 younger, to all aspects of civil litigation. So, I can't  
23 really think of - with the exception of, we did no family  
24 law, so I'm not - other than my community property law  
25 class, that's all I know about family law.

1 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: No criminal law?

2 MS. SIMAS: No criminal law. Just civil  
3 litigation.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You said you did employment  
5 law and insurance. What types of issues did you encounter  
6 with those two?

7 MS. SIMAS: Well, one of the employment cases was  
8 a wrongful termination lawsuit filed by a lawyer of a law  
9 firm. We represented the law firm. And the insurance -  
10 actually, the MP3 case was insurance coverage because we  
11 represented AIG, and they had covered - they had insurance  
12 policies, you know, policies regarding - and professional  
13 liability policies - regarding the coverage with the  
14 studios, and they were basically trying to say that the  
15 music - that we should be covering for the illegal  
16 downloading of music and AIG was saying, well, no, this is  
17 actually theft and fraud, and Section 503, which is  
18 another section that doesn't allow for insurance coverage,  
19 comes into play there, so that was the argument.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay, wow.

21 MS. SIMAS: You can't have willful - you can't  
22 have coverage for willful violations of the law, so, for  
23 example --

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yes, you can't have insurance  
25 coverage --

1 MS. SIMAS: Yeah, exactly, so that was that case.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yes, I discovered that  
3 somewhere around my career, too, so that was interesting.

4 MS. SIMAS: But I should know redistricting and I  
5 can tell you, I actually do have a much better  
6 understanding of it now, it is a fascinating area of law  
7 because I always was interested - one of my favorite  
8 classes in law school, you take a year of it, was  
9 Constitutional Law, but it is difficult to be a  
10 Constitutional law lawyer because there is not a lot that  
11 you can do with it, so I really did have fun like reading  
12 up on the Strict Scrutiny Standard and how it applies in  
13 different sections. It is different for Section 5 vs.  
14 Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. And I really did get  
15 into the weeds on this and I have a pretty good grasp of  
16 what's going on.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How do you feel about, you  
18 know, you understand the theory, basically, and the  
19 underlying principles; how do you make that leap to - how  
20 do you think it is going to be so challenging to actually  
21 draw the maps, knowing what you know now?

22 MS. SIMAS: Uh huh, well, I think that is the  
23 advantage of having a 14-person Commission, because I'm  
24 hoping that there will be someone that actually has  
25 perhaps done this before and, if not, then immediately we



1 would look for someone that could - that has map drawing  
2 experience. And if there is no one on the Commission that  
3 has the really intricate understanding of Maptitude, then  
4 right away we're going to have to either select someone  
5 that will sit down and learn that program, which I feel  
6 that I could do, or, there's also another institute that  
7 has on-site, online, 24-hour day coverage of explaining  
8 how Maptitude works, and they put on conferences, as well,  
9 recognizing that there is a budget to this, and there is a  
10 very definitive timeline, there is going - the first  
11 couple of weeks are going to require pinpointing each  
12 person on the Commission what their strengths are, what we  
13 are lacking, and go from there.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How much time do I have?  
15 Seven minutes? You said you also do legal malpractice.

16 MS. SIMAS: Uh huh.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Attorneys, I'm assuming.

18 MS. SIMAS: Yeah, we represent either the law  
19 firm, yeah, it's --

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Your own law firm?

21 MS. SIMAS: No, no. Our law firm would hire  
22 another law firm to represent - in that scenario. We  
23 would represent the lawyers being sued in another law  
24 firm, and have also been on the other side of suing  
25 lawyers for malpractice.

1 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Both plaintiff and defendant?

2 MS. SIMAS: Uh huh.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What types of malpractice  
4 issues?

5 MS. SIMAS: One of them involved - this was about  
6 five or six years ago, it was a patent infringement, that  
7 was another very technical, complicated case, it was a  
8 patent infringement case. He was a patent lawyer. He was  
9 in his mid to late 60's, a very prominent attorney in LA,  
10 had done patent law for years, and there was a mistake in  
11 the filing of a patent on the application of the date,  
12 which was critical, and because of that, he was sued for  
13 malpractice, and so we defended him in that case. I mean,  
14 you can get malpractice from anything, you know?

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah.

16 MS. SIMAS: Forget to cross a "T" and it may  
17 really do damage.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you defend any attorneys  
19 with malpractice with regard to their licenses or...?

20 MS. SIMAS: With regard to their licenses?

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Licensing, yeah.

22 MS. SIMAS: No.

23 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: No. Do you find it at any  
24 time difficult to remain impartial when you were doing  
25 malpractice, legal malpractice cases or any other?

1 MS. SIMAS: You mean advocating for the attorney?

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh huh.

3 MS. SIMAS: Well, I've been on both sides and, of  
4 course, this is the lawyer going to say this, but I truly  
5 believed when I was on the Plaintiff side suing the lawyer  
6 that the lawyer did commit malpractice and deserved to be  
7 civilly liable, so I think I am very objective. I mean,  
8 you get the cases at law firms that are handed to you, but  
9 there was only one - I would not work on a case if I did  
10 not feel committed. In fact, there was only one time that  
11 it happened in my 10-year career, but I told the partner  
12 that I could not be on this case because I didn't support  
13 it.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: In what way?

15 MS. SIMAS: Well, I can't really get into the  
16 details, but I did not believe - I was not believing the  
17 client's story, and I'll leave it at that.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Not credible.

19 MS. SIMAS: Uh huh. And so, not only did I feel  
20 that I wouldn't make a good attorney for that person, but  
21 I cannot go into court and make representations to a court  
22 of law that I don't believe are actually accurate.

23 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What did you learn about the  
24 concerns of your clients that would contribute to your  
25 role as a Commissioner?

1 MS. SIMAS: You know, it's interesting because I  
2 learned it particularly in the legal malpractice context,  
3 because we were representing a very prominent law firm and  
4 another lawyer - I will say it - it was Skadden Arps, and  
5 then another lawyer who had been a fabulous lawyers for  
6 years, and so you would expect that if he were being sued  
7 for malpractice, this is old hat, he's been a litigator  
8 for 60 - no big deal, this is going to be easy, well,  
9 everyone, once they - and I'm sure myself, as well -  
10 become a plaintiff or a defendant, it's a very  
11 intimidating experience. And I've learned that whether  
12 you're an attorney for 60 years, or you know, Ms. Song,  
13 who was born and raised in Korea, it's still a very trying  
14 experience, and when it's happening to you and you're on  
15 that witness stand, or you're being deposed, you really -  
16 the more that the lawyer can almost hold your hand and  
17 give you pep talks and say, "You're going to get through  
18 this," that's really important. And listening to the  
19 client. And, you know, hearing out their concerns,  
20 because it's a scary process.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: No, I believe it. Can you  
22 tell us about the lobbying activities the firm performs  
23 for its clients?

24 MS. SIMAS: Actually, I can't because I'm  
25 completely unfamiliar with that. I know that there is a

1 portion of the firm that is called Bingham Consulting and  
2 that it is a separate - it's not part of the LLP, I don't  
3 believe, but I'm not in any way involved in that  
4 whatsoever. I don't even know what those people do. In  
5 fact, I think the majority of Bingham Consulting Group is  
6 in - and I can't even be certain, but I think they're in  
7 San Francisco. But that's a completely - like we're  
8 lawyers, and then they have like these consultants that do  
9 lobbying on behalf - I don't even know who they lobby for,  
10 to be honest, I mean, it's not that I'm ignorant about the  
11 firm, it's just that that really is kept separate from the  
12 law firm.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay, so you've never  
14 participated in any lobbying activities whatsoever?

15 MS. SIMAS: No.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I understand that Bingham  
17 McCutcheon also operates a Federal Political Action  
18 Committee. Are you aware of this?

19 MS. SIMAS: They do? No, I'm unaware. And if  
20 they do, it's likely that they are - well, I'm trying to  
21 think, I mean, they represented Guantanamo Bay Detainees,  
22 but other than that, they tend - their political work  
23 tends to - they were involved in the Prop. 8 lawsuit, I  
24 know that, but, again, I'm completely out of any political  
25 part of the firm. And if they do have a Political Action

1 Committee, it is probably the majority of the money would  
2 go to Democrats, which is - I'm a Republican, so - I  
3 certainly wasn't behind the scenes lobbying, you know.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. So you don't know  
5 about really the causes other than this Prop. 8 that it  
6 supports and --

7 MS. SIMAS: I know they were involved in that  
8 case, but I don't even know if the PAC - if PAC money went  
9 to that, I'm not certain. They just do a lot of pro bono  
10 work, and the pro bono work - the only pro bono work I  
11 participated in while at the firm was doing adoption work  
12 for foster children and the LA Public Council, they have  
13 this great program where, annually, they try to get all  
14 foster children adopted, so I helped get three different  
15 children adopted. And then some of the other pro bono  
16 work is - that's all the pro bono work I did when I was at  
17 Bingham. But nothing political unless you consider  
18 adopting children political.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh, no.

20 MS. SIMAS: Not really, unless you are Angelina  
21 Jolie and you go all over the world.

22 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Your time is up.

23 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay, thank you.

24 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Sorry.

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: That's okay.

1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Panelists, are there  
2 additional questions?

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Not at this point.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I'll wait until you're done.

6 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay. Ms. Simas, how did  
7 you get selected as a Super Lawyer of Southern California?

8 MS. SIMAS: You know what? I honestly don't know.  
9 I mean, every year they come out with who made the list,  
10 and it's just an honor to have been chosen because there  
11 was no interviewing process. I think they might monitor  
12 the Court pleadings and then maybe monitor the results of  
13 those cases, and then talk to perhaps like authorities in  
14 law firms and look around at various Los Angeles  
15 communities at whose rising stars, and I got it two years  
16 in a row, so I'm very proud of it, but I'm not exactly  
17 sure how they select that.

18 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Did they do an article or  
19 anything like that?

20 MS. SIMAS: They did. They actually send you a  
21 big plaque and they announce it. It's kind of a big deal.

22 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, what did they write  
23 about you?

24 MS. SIMAS: Well, they'll say, you know, they just  
25 have an article about how made this year's Super Lawyers,

1 and they name up and coming stars, and I don't remember  
2 the number, exactly, maybe there were 40 or 50 in LA, and  
3 so they print the names and what type of practice you do,  
4 and a brief description of your law practice, and that's  
5 it. No, like, headline. But I'm not out for publicity  
6 anyway, so it's fine. My mom was proud, though. My  
7 parents put it on the refrigerator door.

8 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: What did you find  
9 disenchanting about being an attorney?

10 MS. SIMAS: I actually love the profession. I  
11 think if you could change one thing, it would be billable  
12 hours. I think it's not impossible because people do it,  
13 but it's virtually impossible to get married, have kids,  
14 and be a female partner at a law firm, I think it's very  
15 difficult to strike that balance because our minimum  
16 billable's were 2,100, which a billable hour translates -  
17 I mean, that's what you're billing, so you have to do  
18 2,100 hours plus bathroom breaks, lunch, driving, I mean,  
19 none of that is billable, so it really is an enormous  
20 amount of time. And I thought, you know, why is it that  
21 men are able to do this, and a lot of times it is because  
22 they have a wife at home doing everything else. But I  
23 personally, I mean, I have to do everything and take care  
24 of a dog, so that was all I could keep going and that's  
25 why I reached the point, saying, "I'm not going to be able



1 to do this and have a balanced life unless I do something  
2 different.

3 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So what happened with that?  
4 I mean, obviously you had your - what does Oprah call it -  
5 "Ah Ha moment," or whatever?

6 MS. SIMAS: Yes.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You had your Ah Ha moment....

8 MS. SIMAS: It was actually with my 35<sup>th</sup> birthday,  
9 June 21<sup>st</sup> of last year, and I think, when you're young you  
10 have these certain images of what you're going to be like  
11 at 35 and at 50, and I woke up at 35 and I'm not quite  
12 where I want to be, and I know that unless I made a  
13 dramatic change, I'm going to be there at 45 which, again,  
14 I love being on - the law firm is great, but I do have  
15 other goals and aspirations, and if you don't jump off the  
16 train, you're going to stay on it, so it's a difficult  
17 choice, but I'm glad - this last year really has been,  
18 it's been wonderful. I'm not going to talk about my dog  
19 again, but even spending time with my parents, I mean,  
20 they are in their late 60's now and they live in Northern  
21 and Central California, my family does, and so I'm pretty  
22 much one of the only ones in Southern California, so I  
23 didn't get to see them nearly as much as I wanted, and  
24 then when you see them, you have your Blackberry and  
25 people are calling you from the firm on the phone, and I

1 never had the quality time. And I went with my parents to  
2 Cabo last Thanksgiving, we spent two weeks there, and we  
3 made dinner together. I mean, it's wonderful to just take  
4 a break from life and really enjoy what matters.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So did you go to the  
6 partners and say, "Hey, look, I need a break?" Or are you  
7 on a leave of absence? Did you resign? What happened?

8 MS. SIMAS: Well, I'm close, in particular, to one  
9 of the partners there and so, I mean, he could tell that I  
10 was starting - he knows that I would like to get married  
11 one day, and that it's difficult to date when you're  
12 working 60 and 70 hours a week, and so I've had these  
13 conversations with him before. So I don't think it was a  
14 complete shock that I said, you know, "I think I need to  
15 change." And I still have lunch with him all the time,  
16 and I feel like I could go back and work with him if I  
17 want, and that's an option, is part time, but I don't see  
18 myself working in a law firm environment of that intensity  
19 anymore, that's not for me.

20 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I don't think you're the  
21 first attorney, first female, to feel that way. And it's  
22 not about the firm, right? It's about the practice.

23 MS. SIMAS: The female partners that were in our  
24 office, there were three of them, two of whom are not  
25 married and, again, that's fine, but if one of your goals

1 is that you'd like to be married, and you look up and your  
2 only role models are two women who aren't married, and  
3 another woman who is just constantly running, and we've  
4 had the conversations, too, and she feels like she's not  
5 pleasing anyone; you're not pleasing your kid and you're  
6 not pleasing the law firm, so it's a difficult balance.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So do you have any concerns  
8 that you may be jumping from the frying pan to the fire?

9 MS. SIMAS: No, actually I don't because I think  
10 this is such a different experience. You know, first, I  
11 don't think it will be as intense as a law firm  
12 environment, I recognize that it is going to take a lot of  
13 hours, but with the law firm, I mean, that is 24/7. I  
14 can't imagine getting a call from - well, it wouldn't be a  
15 partner in this circumstance - but from a fellow  
16 Commissioner - it could happen, but this happens routinely  
17 at law firms, Friday night at 7:00 you're set to go visit  
18 a friend in San Diego for the weekend and, nope, you're  
19 not going. I mean, that has happened so many times, and  
20 that might happen once or twice during the Commission's  
21 work, but I can't foresee it happening every weekend.

22 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: My favorite was the Summary  
23 Judgment Motion that came in at 4:30 on a Wednesday before  
24 Thanksgiving.

25 MS. SIMAS: Yeah, those are great.

1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, are you at all  
2 concerned that there could be a problem? Do you foresee a  
3 problem if the Commission is comprised of too many lawyers  
4 and academics?

5 MS. SIMAS: Not really. I mean, I think if they  
6 possess the necessary qualifications, I mean, if they have  
7 the ability to be impartial, they understand the  
8 demographics and diversity of California, and they are  
9 able to analyze, I mean, that's really all that's required  
10 by the Voters FIRST Act. And it would be nice if there  
11 were different occupations, but I don't think it's  
12 necessary. And I understand people's concern that this  
13 started off as, you know, I think that they've got to be  
14 everyday citizens, and why can't we have all walks of  
15 life, and I think that's important, but we also want them  
16 to be qualified, and not to say that someone who is an  
17 Electrician can't be qualified because they certainly can,  
18 but I do think that if you have a grasp of understanding  
19 the law, you might be able to pick it up easier and at a  
20 faster pace, so I don't think that's a problem. The only  
21 - the big problem would be how the media might play it out  
22 and say, you know, "This has ended up being all lawyers,"  
23 but look at the Legislature, I mean, there are a lot of  
24 lawyers there, as well. So, I don't know, it's a tough  
25 call. But the Applicants, they come from all backgrounds,

1 so - and it's a drawing of a hat, really.

2 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Bingo cage.

3 MS. SIMAS: Oh, Bingo cage, okay. Note to self.

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You worked in the Assembly  
5 as an intern, you talked a little about that. Who did you  
6 work for?

7 MS. SIMAS: I worked for a man named Dean Andal.  
8 Would you like me to explain more about why I didn't put  
9 his name on the application?

10 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Oh, I didn't put his name  
11 on the application because the reason - he is very  
12 conservative and he's a controversial person, so I  
13 thought, again, knowing that people tend to make snap  
14 judgments, I was afraid that someone might see that and  
15 automatically associate his ideology with mine. And we do  
16 differ ideologically. He was my local Assemblyman and,  
17 knowing that I have an interest in Political Science, as  
18 well as wanting to go on to law school, I was just  
19 thrilled to work for him for two summers. So I am a  
20 Republican, but he is a very very staunch Conservative,  
21 and so I know that his name might send shivers up the  
22 spines of some Democrats, and I just want them to know  
23 that I am not Dean Andal, that I just worked for him in  
24 college for a couple summers to get the experience working  
25 at the Capitol.

1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I am actually not familiar  
2 with him, although I probably should be.

3 MS. SIMAS: Well, again, it was like almost 15  
4 years ago, so, you know, a lot of water under the bridge,  
5 but there are some people, you know, that don't have -  
6 they draw fire on both sides. So...

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Do you want to tell us what  
8 ideological differences you have from him?

9 MS. SIMAS: Well, I mean, I am a Republican and I  
10 am fiscally conservative. There were occasions when we  
11 disagreed and I let him know when I disagreed, on some  
12 social issues.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Do you have contacts in the  
14 building now at the Capitol Building?

15 MS. SIMAS: No, I know no one here. I've seen  
16 Arnold Schwarzenegger in a couple of movies, but that's  
17 about my contact. I haven't actually even been back here  
18 since I worked in the Capitol.

19 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Well, welcome.

20 MS. SIMAS: I know, it's exciting.

21 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, having litigated  
22 myself, I know there are a lot of people who say there is  
23 nothing worse than an LA lawyer. What do you say to those  
24 people?

25 MS. SIMAS: Well, they've been watching too much

1    *LA Law*. The stereotype - I mean, the media does not  
2    demonstrate what it's like to be a lawyer. I mean, *Ally*  
3    *McBeal*, you know, *Law and Order* - *Law and Order* is a  
4    little more accurate, but LA lawyers, I mean, we work just  
5    like everyone else. Litigation is litigation. I mean, I  
6    did have some higher profile entertainment cases, but at  
7    the end of the day, whether it is a case involving Clint  
8    Eastwood, or it is a case involving Ms. Song, you're still  
9    dealing with legal issues. It might be a little more fun  
10   to talk about it at a cocktail party or something, but  
11   it's just litigation. So, I think LA lawyers are just  
12   like, you know, most of the other lawyers. We have a lot  
13   more traffic, though.

14           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I don't think I have  
15   additional questions. Panelists? Ms. Spano.

16           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I'd like to know how  
17   comfortable or how confident you were about putting the  
18   information about working as an intern for Assemblyman  
19   Dean Andal in your application?

20           MS. SIMAS: What do you mean, how confident?

21           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How confident you were about  
22   putting all that information in there?

23           MS. SIMAS: Are you talking about the public  
24   comment?

25           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: No, I'm talking about what

1 you wrote in your application. I know we followed up with  
2 you, the Bureau has.

3 MS. SIMAS: Yes, that's why I wasn't sure.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And so I'd like to know how  
5 confident you were using - I think you expressed some  
6 reservations about putting all that information in the  
7 application.

8 MS. SIMAS: As far as the public comment goes? Or  
9 in my Supplemental -

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: No, in your application, your  
11 supplemental.

12 MS. SIMAS: Oh, I'm fine with what I put in the  
13 Supplemental Application. What was a difficult line, or  
14 balance, to walk was that I liked Dean Andal, and I  
15 appreciated the opportunity that he gave me to work for  
16 two summers, and I owe him that respect, and you know, I  
17 didn't want in any way to disrespect him, or have my  
18 public comment come across that I, you know, didn't like  
19 working for him because I enjoyed the process. I just,  
20 again, didn't want to also be tied in with his ideology.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you tell me about the  
22 Santa Monica Philosophy Group?

23 MS. SIMAS: Oh, are you familiar with Meetup?  
24 Okay, well, Meetups are on the Internet, there's all these  
25 - that's another way you could actually do a Meetup group



1 for the Redistricting Commission, but Meetup groups are  
2 groups of people that get together with shared interests,  
3 and my minor in college was philosophy, so I love reading  
4 like Plato and Aristotle and I'm kind of a nerd that way,  
5 so there's a philosophy Meetup group and it meets  
6 sometimes twice a month, and what they do is, beforehand,  
7 they'll send out a mass e-mail of potential topics to  
8 discuss, and then they vote on what topic they want, and  
9 then you just show up and you break up into groups and  
10 debate that topic, and then at the end everyone gets  
11 together and has like a little bit of a debate. I know it  
12 sounds like a great time, but it really was.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Well, it sounds like  
14 something you're very interested in.

15 MS. SIMAS: It is, I mean, they ask like deep  
16 philosophical issues and, you know, we're trying to find  
17 out the meaning of life, you know, that sort of thing.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do the principals of  
19 philosophical discussion have a place in the Commission?

20 MS. SIMAS: Do they have a place?

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Uh huh.

22 MS. SIMAS: What do you mean by that?

23 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you feel that you can  
24 discuss and engage in philosophical discussion on the  
25 Commission?

1 MS. SIMAS: Well, we could, we're not going to  
2 really have time to discuss the merits of Plato because  
3 we're going to have a lot on our plate, but I'm sure -

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do you think the principles  
5 apply, maybe?

6 MS. SIMAS: Yeah, I think that, again, the more  
7 reading you do, the more knowledge you acquire, you know,  
8 there are issues often times about morality and so forth  
9 in philosophy. I think the more you can bring to the  
10 table, it will somehow translate into whatever work I or  
11 another person would do.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: One more question -

13 MS. SIMAS: And it involves a lot of reasoning.  
14 Philosophy is a lot of logic and reasoning. If you're a  
15 philosophy major or minor, you have to take advanced  
16 statistics in order to get that degree, at UCSC, so....

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You had an opportunity to  
18 train with Bela Karoyli.

19 MS. SIMAS: Yes.

20 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And you said this was a life  
21 changing experience for you and you suffered an injury.  
22 Can you tell us about this experience?

23 MS. SIMAS: Yeah, that was really actually rough.  
24 I mean, that's when you're 14-years-old and your heart is  
25 set on, you know, you want to be the next Mary Lou and

1 then suddenly you just think, why live anymore. So, I  
2 actually was doing the vault, I don't know if you're  
3 familiar with that, and I fractured my knee, and it was on  
4 the spot like the career ended, and immediately, there are  
5 plans that you have for your life just completely shift.  
6 I knew I wanted to be a lawyer, but that was all going to  
7 happen after I got my Gold Medal at the Olympics, so it  
8 just shifted and, I don't know, the talent and the skills  
9 that you acquire through a demanding sport like that are -  
10 they last a lifetime. I was in the gym five hours a day  
11 for weeks on end, every day of the week, and you learn  
12 discipline, determination, you know, when you lose you  
13 learn how to handle a loss, and when you win, you learn  
14 how to win gracefully. I mean, this sport, I cannot speak  
15 highly enough about it.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How will this experience  
17 support your efforts as a Commissioner?

18 MS. SIMAS: Again, it's instilled discipline,  
19 determination, hard work, working as a team, because a lot  
20 of times people see ice-skaters in the same way, that  
21 they're very individualistic, and it's true, you know,  
22 they want to win individually, but our team, our goal was  
23 to win the State Championships, so I learned, you know,  
24 you've got to root for yourself, but if your team member  
25 falls off the beam, you can't get excited because you want

1 your team to do well, so you want to root for everyone on  
2 the team to do the best they can because that's truly  
3 what's going to make the team a success. So, looking out  
4 for my fellow Commissioners, you know, and rooting them  
5 on, and maybe they got a quote in the newspaper and it  
6 only mentioned them, who cares? If it spins the  
7 Commission in a good light, I mean, that is just to my  
8 benefit and the benefit of the Commission, as well.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

10 MS. SIMAS: And that was one more thing that I  
11 wanted to mention about the Media is I think - I wanted to  
12 just mention the importance of the Commission speaking  
13 with one voice, as opposed to - because my law firm had a  
14 policy regarding media relations, so often times we would  
15 be called about cases, but instead of just talking off the  
16 cuff, it was important to go to the law firm and make sure  
17 you say something because you are speaking on behalf of  
18 the law firm. So, if you're going to speak as a  
19 Commission member, one of the things that I would want to  
20 at least try to get into like our guidelines would be that  
21 we have to recognize we're a Commission here, and we need  
22 to work as a group so that, when there are quotes in the  
23 newspaper, you know, it is reflected accurately and  
24 positively.

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thoughtful responses before

1     you speak. Thank you.

2                 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Simas, we have one  
3     minute left. Panelists, I assume there are no more  
4     questions? If you would like to make a very brief closing  
5     statement, you're welcome to do so. We will have to  
6     interrupt you mid-sentence if it goes over.

7                 MS. SIMAS: Yeah, I think I pretty much covered  
8     everything I wanted to cover. Again, I'm not brownnosing,  
9     I genuinely think that you guys are doing a phenomenal  
10    job. I mean, the skills you have are the skills that a  
11    Commissioner needs, your patience, your post-scrutiny,  
12    your hard work, and I am sure when you began this process,  
13    you had no idea what you were getting into, much like many  
14    of the Commissioners are in the same boat. But you've  
15    done a fantastic job and I hope that everyone realizes  
16    what an important Commission this can be and how well it's  
17    been going so far.

18                MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you.

19                CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you so much.

20                PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

21                MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you for coming to see  
22    us. Let's recess until 2:44.

23                         (Off the record at 2:31 p.m.)

24                         (Back on the record at 2:45 p.m.)

25                MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: It is 2:45 and all

1 Panelists being present, let's go ahead and go back on the  
2 record. Our next Applicant is here, Ms. Fay Mason.

3 How are you, Ms. Mason?

4 MS. MASON: I'm fine, thank you.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Are you ready to begin?

6 MS. MASON: Yes, I am.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Very good. Since our  
8 Secretary of gone, I will start the clock and let's hope  
9 it works.

10 What specific skills do you believe a good  
11 Commissioner should possess? Of those skills, which do  
12 you possess? Which do you not possess, and how will you  
13 compensate for it? Is there anything in your life that  
14 would prohibit or impair your ability to perform all of  
15 the duties of a Commissioner?

16 MS. MASON: I believe a good Commissioner should  
17 possess the ability to be impartial, ability to listen  
18 attentively, ability to analyze complex data, ability to  
19 use logic, have good organizational skills, good time  
20 management skills, ability to read and understand complex  
21 information, ability to articulate thoughts and ideals,  
22 ability to draw out thoughts and ideals from others,  
23 ability to work well with others, respecting diversity of  
24 opinions and backgrounds, and ability to establish  
25 collegial relationships with others.

1           Of those skills, I believe I possess all of them.  
2   I know that I do not have specific knowledge with regard  
3   to redistricting, however, but I am certain that I would  
4   be able to gain the necessary knowledge to be a good  
5   Commissioner. I might add that, on a much smaller scale,  
6   as a school chief business official, I was able to and  
7   experienced in drawing School District Attendance Area  
8   boundaries; that is a much smaller scale than  
9   redistricting for Legislators in the State of California.  
10  I also was involved in drawing boundaries for school  
11  busing, too, so that, again, would be on a much smaller  
12  scale.

13           I am not aware of anything in my life or  
14  background that would prohibit or impair my ability to  
15  perform all the duties of a Commissioner.

16           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a circumstance  
17  from your personal experience where you had to work with  
18  others to resolve a conflict or a difference of opinion.  
19  Please describe the issue and explain your role in  
20  addressing and resolving the conflict. If you are  
21  selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting  
22  Commission, tell us how you would resolve conflicts that  
23  may arise among the Commissioners.

24           MS. MASON: During my 30 plus years of public  
25  administration, I had numerous occasions to resolve

1 conflicts and differences of opinion, particularly with my  
2 involvement in Union negotiations, budget reductions, and  
3 personnel administration. However, I will describe one  
4 dealing with budget reductions at one of my former school  
5 districts.

6           The district was faced with the need to make  
7 budget cuts as a result of inadequate revenues to meet  
8 current expenditures. As the district's Chief Business  
9 official in charge of the budget, it was my responsibility  
10 to determine the amount necessary to cut and make  
11 recommendations to the governing board. Of course,  
12 everyone had an opinion as to where those cuts should be  
13 and, of course, those cuts should not be in their  
14 department or unit. Thus, there was a definite difference  
15 of opinion, and where the district should reduce its  
16 budget. In an effort to prevent escalating hostility  
17 and/or ill will, I proposed that we utilize a committee  
18 approach to making the budget reductions. The committee  
19 would be comprised of representatives from the various  
20 departments and units, and their tasks would be to receive  
21 information and become educated about what each  
22 department, division, or unit did in the district, why  
23 they existed, and what the ramifications would be if they  
24 didn't exist. The purpose was to ensure that everyone had  
25 a common understanding of what each department's function



1 and service was for the overall good of the district. I  
2 felt that the group would be capable of coming up with  
3 cost saving ideals and/or other efficiencies, as well as  
4 looking at just the issues of lay-offs or position  
5 eliminations, thus, I felt a committee would be the best  
6 vehicle for resolving conflict and/or differences of  
7 opinion.

8 I was the Committee Chair, I was responsible for  
9 organizing the meetings, including the scheduling of  
10 various department heads attendance to present their  
11 department service or function, gathering information  
12 requested by the various committee members, and then  
13 ultimately preparing and presenting a report that would go  
14 to the governing board, making recommendations as to where  
15 cost savings could be found.

16 We were successful and there was not a minority  
17 report, and the report that was presented to the governing  
18 board was approved by the entire committee.

19 Now, the second part of the question as to what I  
20 would do to resolve conflicts that might arise among the  
21 Commissioners. I'm not sure as an individual Commissioner  
22 that that would be my role or responsibility, however, as  
23 an individual Commissioner, I would make sure that I do  
24 not create conflict with others. While I think it is  
25 human nature to have a difference of opinion with others,

1 that doesn't have to result in conflict. As an individual  
2 Commissioner, I would make sure that I give respect to  
3 others' opinions and suggestions, and express mine in a  
4 non-threatening and non-confrontational manner. In my  
5 past, I've always used humor as a way to diffuse  
6 potentially volatile situations. I can almost always find  
7 a light side of things, that typically will bring about a  
8 chuckle or a smile from others.

9           There are other techniques that can be employed to  
10 diffuse tense situations, depending upon the specifics.  
11 These can be taking a break, agreeing to disagree,  
12 requesting additional information, or something else, it  
13 just depends on the situation and the personalities  
14 involved.

15           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's  
16 work impact the State? Which of these impacts will  
17 improve the State the most? Is there any potential for  
18 the Commission's work to harm the State, and if so, in  
19 what ways?

20           MS. MASON: I believe the Commission's work will  
21 result in legislative districts drawn to serve the  
22 interests of the voters. I think legislators will be more  
23 geographically accessible to their constituents. The work  
24 will empower voters, it will create more competitiveness  
25 in legislative primaries and elections, it will reduce the

1 influence of the two-party system and elected officials'  
2 loyalty to the party, rather than to their constituents.  
3 It hopefully will result in higher voter turn-out, as  
4 people will feel they have more choices. Hopefully,  
5 politicians will be accountable to the voters with an end  
6 result of better, more efficient, and voter responsive  
7 state governance with less gridlock in Sacramento.

8           As to the impacts that will improve the State the  
9 most, the impact that I believe will improve the State the  
10 most is the elected officials being more responsive to  
11 voters. Being responsive to voters is the assurance that  
12 we will have a truly democratic form of government.

13           At this time, I don't see a potential for the  
14 Commission's work to harm the State if it is done  
15 according to the law. I know there are some that might  
16 argue that the process will result in more inexperienced  
17 legislators. I don't necessarily see that as a harm, as  
18 inexperience does not mean ineffective. It could very  
19 well mean fresh, new, innovative approaches to some of the  
20 problems that we face in California, so I really do not  
21 see harm coming from the Commission.

22           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation where  
23 you have had to work as a part of a group to achieve a  
24 common goal, tell us about the goal, describe your role  
25 within the group, and tell us how the group worked or did

1 not work collaboratively to achieve this goal. If you are  
2 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting  
3 Commission, tell us what you would do to foster  
4 collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure the  
5 Commission meets its legal deadlines.

6 MS. MASON: I will describe a situation that  
7 happened in negotiations with the Classified Employees  
8 Union at a former School District. The Classified  
9 Employees Union, which was CSEA, or California School  
10 Employees Association, wanted a financial attendance  
11 incentive program for its part time unit members.  
12 Management in that district was concerned that any type of  
13 financial incentive program would cost additional money  
14 that just was not available. The common goal was to  
15 arrive at a financial incentive program that rewarded part  
16 time employees for good attendance, but did not cost the  
17 district any additional money - sounded like an impossible  
18 task, but we determined that, in order to accomplish that  
19 task, rather than to try to do it in negotiations at the  
20 bargaining table, we would form a subgroup or committee.  
21 And, again, I was the Chair of that committee.

22 Once the group determined a program, then that  
23 program would be brought back to the bargaining table. As  
24 the Chair of the committee, I was in charge of all the  
25 logistical issues, including a schedule of meetings,

1 gathering data and information for presentation to the  
2 group, and drafting a report back to the bargaining team.  
3 I also needed to ensure responsiveness by all committee  
4 members, ensuring that they had opportunities to express  
5 their opinions, doubts, and worries, and that those were  
6 adequately addressed in arriving at a program. The group  
7 did work collaboratively to achieve the goal, and we did  
8 come up with a plan that was taken back to the bargaining  
9 table, and agreed to by both sides, thus becoming a  
10 tentative agreement that was later included in the overall  
11 collective bargaining agreement once all other issues were  
12 bargained. I might add that that attendance incentive  
13 program worked very well in that district for several  
14 years.

15           If I am selected to serve on the Commission, in  
16 order to foster collaboration among other Commissioners, I  
17 would solicit and respect other members' opinions and  
18 listen attentively when they speak. I would also try to  
19 get to know each of the other Commissioners. It has been  
20 my experience that, when you know someone personally,  
21 you're more likely to work harmoniously with them. As far  
22 as ensuring meeting legal deadlines, I tend to be very  
23 much of a taskmaster. While I'm known for my humor and  
24 likeable personality, I'm equally well known for my  
25 ability to get the job done, and get it done on time. As

1 a public administrator in both Personnel and Business  
2 Administration, I faced many drop dead deadlines. I never  
3 missed a deadline, nor did any of my staff, or any of the  
4 committees for which I was responsible. Not meeting  
5 deadlines is unacceptable to me. I would do my best as a  
6 Commissioner to ensure that we did not miss any legal  
7 deadlines, even if I seemed like a nag, reminding my  
8 fellow Commissioners about our deadline.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of  
10 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people  
11 from all over California who come from very different  
12 backgrounds and very different perspectives. If you are  
13 selected to serve on the Commission, tell us about the  
14 specific skills you possess that will make you effective  
15 in interacting with the public.

16 MS. MASON: First of all, I believe I have an open  
17 and inviting personality that relates well to people from  
18 various backgrounds. I genuinely like people and it  
19 shows. I'm able to converse with all different kinds of  
20 people, I have a sense of humor that has always served me  
21 well in making friends and acquaintances with people from  
22 all different kinds of backgrounds. I've had a variety of  
23 experiences and I'm able to relate to all kinds of people.  
24 Also, the educational leadership doctoral program at the  
25 University of La Verne afforded me the opportunity to work

1 with people from all over California, from a variety of  
2 backgrounds and perspectives. We came together twice a  
3 year for a week each time, to work on projects and  
4 assignments.

5 With all of these different backgrounds and  
6 personalities, we were given a task or assignment and we  
7 were expected to accomplish it in order to achieve the  
8 maximum number of points for a grade. I learned to be a  
9 part of the team, to find the common goal, to get people  
10 to verbalize their rationale, and stay on target to  
11 achieve success.

12 I have lived, worked, and currently worship and  
13 play in multi-ethnic and diverse situations. While the  
14 majority of my adult life has been in Southern California,  
15 specifically the region known as the Inland Empire, I've  
16 lived in Northern California for a year, and I also come  
17 to Northern California twice a year to play in Lake Tahoe.  
18 I've traveled all over the world and I've been on five  
19 Continents, visiting numerous countries. I was successful  
20 in a public service career of over 30 years, spanning four  
21 different School Districts, and a municipality, all with  
22 varying people from different backgrounds. I was always  
23 highly regarded, respect, and at my last District,  
24 achieved the level of Deputy Superintendent.

25 The communities I've lived in are multi-ethnic,

1 with neighbors from very diverse backgrounds, including  
2 Asian, White, Hispanic, and Black. I currently worship in  
3 a very multi-ethnic church Pastored by a Hispanic male,  
4 with a congregation consisting of African-Americans,  
5 Hispanics, Whites, and Asians. I have personal friends  
6 that I socialize with that are comprised with African-  
7 Americans, Whites, Asians, and Hispanics.

8 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Before I turn it over to  
9 Mr. Ahmadi, I think, in the absence of my left-hand man  
10 here, and the confusion of having to manipulate an  
11 electronic device, I forgot to clarify with you whether  
12 you refer to be referred to as Dr. Mason, or Ms. Mason,  
13 and I referred to you as Ms. Mason. And if that was  
14 wrong, I apologize.

15 MS. MASON: I do have an earned doctorate,  
16 however, Ms. Mason or Dr. Mason, both are equally  
17 acceptable to me.

18 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Well, I believe in giving  
19 credit where it is due, so, Mr. Ahmadi, it is now your  
20 turn to speak with Dr. Mason.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you so much. Good afternoon,  
22 Dr. Mason.

23 DR. MASON: Good afternoon, Mr. Ahmadi.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: I have a few follow-up questions on  
25 your responses, just to clarify a few things. Well, let



1 me first start off with, you know, I'm really impressed  
2 that you have never missed deadline considerations.

3 DR. MASON: Thank you.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Share with us, what is your secret?

5 DR. MASON: I have a tremendous amount of energy,  
6 I have a tremendous amount of drive. I look at what needs  
7 to be done, and I figure out what's the most efficient,  
8 effective, and shortest amount of time in order to  
9 accomplish that, so whether it's been in terms of my own  
10 personal life, or in the business world, that's what I do.  
11 I could give you numerous examples of that, but some of  
12 those deadlines are not necessarily drop dead deadlines in  
13 terms of one's personal life, but it's a deadline that has  
14 been self-imposed. And when I determine that I'm going to  
15 do something, nothing stops me, even if I have to stay up  
16 all night, several nights in a row, or whatever it takes  
17 to get it done, I do it.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Have you given any thoughts to the  
19 Commission's work in terms of a work plan that is  
20 effective and efficient in order for it to meet the  
21 deadline on September 15<sup>th</sup>?

22 DR. MASON: Not knowing all of the specifics  
23 involved, only that there are certain deadlines, I really  
24 do not have a specific plan formulated in my mind that I  
25 feel would be relevant at this time.

1           CHIAR AHMADI: That's fine. Let's assume that  
2   you're one of the eight Commissioners randomly selected on  
3   November 20<sup>th</sup>. What are some of the first things that you  
4   will be doing?

5           DR. MASON: Well, one of the first things that I  
6   would want to do would be to become completely  
7   knowledgeable about the laws, the regulations, all of the  
8   procedures that are pertinent to the issue. Then, of  
9   course, start looking at the logistical aspects of that,  
10   hitting the ground with our feet in terms of making sure  
11   that we had staff, the resources that we need, all of  
12   those kinds of issues being done. And, of course, the  
13   eight have the responsibility of selecting the other six,  
14   so that would be one of the very first things that would  
15   need to be done.

16          CHAIR AHMADI: How would you go about selecting  
17   those six additional Commissioners? What criteria would  
18   you follow? Or what approach would you take?

19          DR. MASON: Well, again, I would not necessarily  
20   want to say that this is the approach that I would want to  
21   take because there are seven other members that are there.  
22   I mean, I might have suggestions and ideals, and I  
23   certainly would offer those suggestions and ideals, but I  
24   don't ever think that I have all the answers to anything,  
25   it's a group process and I would want to work with the

1 other seven members, offer my suggestions to them, and  
2 hope that some of those ring a responsive chord with them  
3 and, of course, listening to what suggestions and ideals  
4 they have.

5 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. And I really do  
6 appreciate your respect for the other seven. But in terms  
7 of your contribution to go about to meet this deadline,  
8 the decisions have to be made in a short period of time,  
9 so in terms of, you know, the six additional  
10 Commissioners, what are some of the qualifications, or  
11 values, or characteristics, that you would want to see in  
12 them that help you to make the decision, or the body to  
13 make that decision?

14 DR. MASON: I definitely would like to see the  
15 aspect of diversity continued in terms of the other six.  
16 Not knowing how the initial eight would look, but  
17 definitely the diversity that has been throughout this  
18 process, I would like to see that continue. Since the  
19 eight are selected on a random basis, you don't know  
20 what's going to be there, but certainly in selected the  
21 other six, I would like to see that to be very high on the  
22 list of selecting the other six. The other thing I would  
23 like to see would be people who are very conversant, very  
24 familiar with, and very committed to a team and a  
25 collaborative type approach because it's only going to be

1 through having that kind of - those kind of people on the  
2 Commission that the Commission will be able to accomplish  
3 what it needs to accomplish. I think, specifically, in  
4 terms of knowledge, you have staff and you have  
5 consultants, and you have others that can provide you with  
6 that, but I would look at the new interpersonal skills and  
7 abilities of people, with the right kind of interpersonal  
8 skills and abilities, those people on the Commission will  
9 learn or gain the knowledge that they need to do their  
10 job. But the key thing would be their own individual  
11 personalities and interpersonal skills and abilities, so I  
12 would be looking for people who are very comfortable, very  
13 familiar, and work well with others.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Very well, thank you.

15 DR. MASON: You are welcome.

16 CHAIR AHMADI: When you were discussing the  
17 potential harm, you mentioned that if everything is done  
18 in accordance with the law, that there will be no harm,  
19 and I understand that. The current districts are drawn in  
20 compliance with the legal requirements, of course, but  
21 there are still some conflicts, some issues that people  
22 have. So, can you share with us some of your ideas about  
23 what needs to happen for the Commission's work not to be  
24 challenged on a legal basis, or any other basis? What are  
25 some of the things that need to be considered to make sure

1 that there is no risk of producing a harmful outcome?

2 DR. MASON: Well, I think in almost every instance  
3 you can have somebody out there who will be unsatisfied  
4 with the end result. So, there will always be the  
5 possibility that somebody is going to file a lawsuit, or  
6 somebody will be unhappy. However, I think if, at the end  
7 of the process, the Commission gives due consideration to  
8 comments from the public, the communities of interest that  
9 are out there, if the process is very transparent and  
10 open, and the majority of people, or people feel like  
11 they've had the opportunity to give their opinion, express  
12 their opinion, and that it has been considered, I think  
13 you minimize the number of challenges that might come  
14 about. I still think, even with all that, there will  
15 still be the possibility that there will be challenges.  
16 It is impossible, I think, to make all of the people happy  
17 all the time.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Correct.

19 DR. MASON: But, again, I think by having a very  
20 open process, one that is inviting, that gives people the  
21 opportunity to express their opinion, and for the  
22 Commission to give due weight and consideration of that,  
23 it should be minimized.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: You mentioned communities of  
25 interest and to keep everybody happy is impossible, or at

1 least not all the time you can keep everybody happy. In a  
2 situation where there is conflicting interests, when you  
3 are hearing the public and you are gathering the public,  
4 and let's say for example - I am just using an example -  
5 you are in a small city where there are more than one  
6 ethnicity with diverse kind of interests, how would you  
7 approach resolving that kind of conflict? Or making a  
8 decision knowing that some people will be unhappy?

9 DR. MASON: I would try to get the members, the  
10 people that are there, to understand the constraints that  
11 we're facing and to air both sides, get people to try to  
12 see what is the common good, what is the common goal, and  
13 what they can and cannot live with, and in life you have  
14 to make compromises. So, I would try, as a Commissioner,  
15 to get them to understand that and to see the other  
16 reasons why the other sides, the other issues, trying to  
17 get them to understand that everybody can't be happy, but  
18 that there are other sides to it, and this is the reason  
19 why the Commission is listening to them, to get all that  
20 input you have the hearings before and you have the  
21 hearings after. So, initially, of course, it's getting  
22 input, and then afterwards you're getting feedback. But I  
23 think, when the Commission is at that point, you want to  
24 be able to explain to people why you decided the way you  
25 did, and normally, being able to give the rationale for

1 that helps a long way in terms of getting buy-in from  
2 people.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thanks again. When you were  
4 describing your experience as part of the response to  
5 question 2, you share with us your experience dealing with  
6 the budget cuts, and you formed a committee that you  
7 chaired to resolve that issue. Did you find it difficult  
8 to stay impartial in that process? If yes, why? And how  
9 did you handle that?

10 DR. MASON: I didn't find it difficult to say  
11 impartial because I was learning information, too. I was  
12 gaining information. So, it was not difficult for me to  
13 be impartial. And my role, again, was to get the people  
14 to be able to hear information, to be able to share and to  
15 find common ground and gain some understanding in terms of  
16 the process, and then be able to make suggestions, but I  
17 did not find it difficult to be impartial.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you. You also  
19 mentioned in your application and also you mentioned as  
20 part of your responses today that you have been on  
21 numerous committees and commissions and task forces. Are  
22 any of these positions appointed by the State Legislature  
23 or the Governor?

24 DR. MASON: No.

25 CHAIR AHMADI: No, okay. Thank you. You also

1 mentioned in your application, well, based on your travels  
2 in California, you have been in various locations. And  
3 you also mentioned that you have been to the five  
4 Continents, which I believe is very valuable in terms of  
5 understanding people. Can you tell us about your  
6 understanding of diversity in California, in general, from  
7 north to south?

8 DR. MASON: Well, having lived in Northern  
9 California for a year, and as I said, visiting up here,  
10 I'm actually a property owner in Lake Tahoe, there is a  
11 difference in terms of how people view the State, in terms  
12 of political leanings, as well as a host of other issues.  
13 But I think that, underneath it all, everybody is a  
14 Californian; we may have different interests in terms of  
15 what we see the direction of the State should go, but  
16 people are still people, we all have the same interests in  
17 terms of wanting this State to move forward, wanting to  
18 see effective leaders, wanting to see a governance  
19 structure that is responsive to voters, so I don't think  
20 there are differences in terms of that. So, I think we  
21 have a lot in common, we have more in common than we have  
22 not in common.

23 CHAIR AHMADI: So how does that understanding help  
24 you in making decisions where to draw the lines? What  
25 would you consider to help you draw the lines?



1 DR. MASON: Okay, I think the interests of people,  
2 of course, you have divisions in terms of cities and  
3 counties, but you have people who have interests based on  
4 where they live, so I think that those kinds of interest  
5 need to be taken into consideration to the extent that the  
6 law permits that, and to the extent that it fits within  
7 the mandates and the law of the Voters FIRST Act. So, I  
8 think you take those into account as you hear people at  
9 the various public meetings, you begin to gain an  
10 understanding of where they're at, and where their  
11 interests are so that you can be better at drawing those  
12 lines.

13 CHAIR AHMADI: Can you give us some examples?

14 DR. MASON: Well, for example, in the area that I  
15 come from in the southern part of the state, we're a very  
16 populace part of the state going from community, to  
17 community, to community; however, as you begin to get  
18 further east and further north, you start getting into  
19 areas that have unique needs, like the high desert area or  
20 the low desert area, as opposed to those that are more  
21 bedroom communities, so that you will look at what those  
22 communities of interest might be, the people in the high  
23 desert tend to like to have more sprawling kinds of issues  
24 that relate specifically to the fact that they like acres  
25 of land around them, whereas, in the suburban areas, you

1 have people that are crowded together and a little more  
2 nested together, so they have different kinds of issues in  
3 terms of the transportation, congestion, water needs, all  
4 of those kinds of things, so that's an example of what  
5 you'd be looking at as you begin to draw boundary lines  
6 in determining districts.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you so much. No more  
8 questions at this point.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

10 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. Hello, Dr. Mason.

11 DR. MASON: Hello.

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I'd like to get just a little  
13 bit more information on one of the examples you provided  
14 us. It was for the - is it the New Teacher Incentive?

15 DR. MASON: No, it was an Attendance Incentive  
16 Program for Classified Employees, part time Classified  
17 Employees.

18 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. You talked about  
19 forming a committee. Who was on the committee and how  
20 many people were on that committee?

21 DR. MASON: There were representatives from the  
22 California School Employees Association Unions, CSEA, and  
23 actually part time employees from different departments.  
24 And those would be people who were impacted by this, who  
25 had good - maybe they didn't, but they had friends or unit

1 members who had good attendance, and yet never received a  
2 financial reward for that. We had managers from  
3 departments that would be paying out money to employees  
4 that had good attendance, so we had representatives from  
5 those people who were affected by such a program. My  
6 recollection is, it was a committee of about nine people  
7 and possibly with myself, 10.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, it was about the same  
9 size as the Commission. Did you have any difficulties  
10 coming to agreement before the product was presented?

11 DR. MASON: Well, obviously, both sides wanted  
12 things a little bit differently. The employees wanted  
13 more money, the managers wanted to give out less money,  
14 but I think the goal was, the common goal, was that  
15 everybody wanted to have good attendance from employees,  
16 so the key was to come up with a plan that would reward  
17 employees, yet not break the budgets of the managers who  
18 were going to have to pay for it, but particularly those  
19 where parents might be charged a fee based on that; you  
20 had the day care program, you had food services, which  
21 impacts the price of school lunches, so definitely you  
22 want to come up with something that would result in not an  
23 additional amount of money being paid out, and therefore  
24 having to increase prices for things. So, yes, there were  
25 some definite challenges to doing that, and the concept

1 that we were able to arrive at as a group was to look at  
2 data. What we did was we looked at three prior years of  
3 data in terms of attendance, patterns, for part time  
4 employees to determine what was in existence. And the  
5 concept was that, if you looked at three years and you  
6 were able to average that over three years, you know what  
7 your costs were because, for almost all of those, when an  
8 employee is out, you have to get a substitute. Just  
9 because an employee is absent, it doesn't mean that you  
10 can't serve lunches that day, or you can't take care of  
11 somebody's child. So you have to spend the money for  
12 substitutes. The point was, if you're spending money for  
13 substitutes, and you're also paying an employee who is  
14 out, you know, how can you then pay money to somebody else  
15 who had a good attendance record? So, by looking at past  
16 years' data and determining what those costs were, we were  
17 able to say that, if, during the next year we were  
18 actually able to reduce the number of absences, then those  
19 employees that were a part of that should be rewarded  
20 monetarily. So we got people to buy into the concept  
21 that, yes, those employees who had good attendance, we  
22 wanted to reward them. But if there were other employees  
23 who exceeded theirs, then you don't want to pay out money  
24 here because it is going to impact parents over there.  
25 So, by getting people to understand why Management was

1 reluctant to pay out money just to employees that had good  
2 attendance, and by getting Managers to understand that,  
3 yes, if there was savings, you can pay out money, then we  
4 were able to gain a common understanding from everybody.  
5 So it was a concept, first looking at data, and then  
6 working from there. So, we were able to get agreement  
7 from everybody and the concept that was utilized was one  
8 that did not cost any additional money. Ultimately, after  
9 several years, though, that pot began to shrink in terms  
10 of the savings, so we later did have to go in and refine  
11 and revamp that program, but it was the start that got us  
12 off to having a Financial Attendance Incentive Program for  
13 part time employees because they basically had nothing  
14 before, and they were beginning to say, "Well, why should  
15 we have good attendance? We don't get any reward for it.  
16 It doesn't count towards retirement. It doesn't do  
17 anything." And a nice letter saying, "Thank you very much  
18 for your attendance" just was not getting it further.

19 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So you had the Unions there.  
20 Did you have to renegotiate a contract? Or did they  
21 accept this agreement that you proposed, or that was  
22 proposed by the committee?

23 DR. MASON: The Union bought off on the agreement  
24 because the initial concept was that this kind of thing  
25 could not be negotiated at the bargaining table, so that

1 was why I proposed to the Union and they bought off on it,  
2 that this be done by a separate group, and what that group  
3 came up - each group, then, was empowered to do that.  
4 What that group came up with would come back to the  
5 bargaining table and already was in the form of a  
6 tentative agreement so that there would be no more  
7 bargaining on that.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. I noticed that you  
9 have numerous boards and committees that you've listed on  
10 your application. There was a couple that didn't have any  
11 dates on them for service, they were the State of  
12 California Budget Review Task Force and the State of  
13 California Charter School Impact Committee. What were the  
14 dates? And why were there no dates on those included?

15 DR. MASON: Okay, I didn't recall at the time, and  
16 I still have not been able to go back specifically and get  
17 the dates. Both committees are what are considered ad hoc  
18 committees, where they were simply a couple days of  
19 service, where a group of school business officials were  
20 gathered together and ordered to assess and address  
21 impacts of various legislation that affected School  
22 Districts either in the business area, or in the personnel  
23 area, provide those impacts over a two or three-day  
24 period, and then the organization that requested those  
25 committees would take that information back to be

1 presented to the Legislators and others. But the one on  
2 Charter Schools was right after the very initial  
3 legislation was passed on Charter Schools, so my  
4 recollection was that was in the 1980s, I think it was  
5 1988, it was a two-day committee, I was asked to serve on  
6 that by School Services of California, I was flown up here  
7 to Sacramento and spent a couple days, along with other  
8 Chief School Business Official Superintendents of Schools  
9 in California, to go through the law, address the impacts  
10 it would have, and then a final report was prepared and  
11 presented.

12 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Do you know about the time  
13 that you were for the California Budget Review Task Force?  
14 Or was that the same time period?

15 DR. MASON: I think that was early 1990s, again,  
16 it was following the passage of legislation pertaining  
17 budgeting for School Districts. I was asked to look at  
18 the legislation, along with other Chief School Business  
19 Officials, and provide that input back; School Services,  
20 again, was the entity that requested that, and a report  
21 was prepared and presented. Ad Hoc, a couple days also.

22 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, pretty much, it was the  
23 Department of Education that selected you for these  
24 committees?

25 DR. MASON: School Services of California does a

1 lot of work for the Department of Education, but they are  
2 not actually the Department of Education, they are  
3 separate entity, they are based here in Sacramento, they  
4 provide a lot of consulting services to School District,  
5 and I believe they do lobbying, also.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. I'm wondering, from  
7 all this experience that you've had on the committees and  
8 the boards, how would you bring that experience into the  
9 Commission?

10 DR. MASON: I think that all of that experience  
11 has taught me a lot about working collaboratively with  
12 others. I have been in the role of not only being on  
13 commissions, committees, task forces, panels, boards, but  
14 I've also been in the position of being the Chief  
15 Administrative Officer to a variety of commissions,  
16 committees, and boards, so I have been on both sides of  
17 that. And having had an extensive amount of experience,  
18 and that experience has been both internally, in terms of  
19 individual School Districts that I've worked in,  
20 regionally in terms of Southern California, as well as  
21 having been on boards and committees that spanned the  
22 entire State where there were representatives coming from  
23 the State. I've learned a lot about being able to work  
24 well with people. And, as a result of those experiences,  
25 I think it is why, in my own professional career, I've



1 utilized the committee task force and the panel approach  
2 to resolving numerous issues. I'm one that actually  
3 thinks that there is value in gathering people together to  
4 come up with solutions to problems, or to make decisions,  
5 that's been unusual, people say, for School Business  
6 people because, typically School Business people don't  
7 work with committees, that's what they told me when I went  
8 from Personnel to Business. They said, "You're the only  
9 Business Person that we know of that has committees." But  
10 I actually every year had a Budget Committee that I worked  
11 with, and it was very important to me to have a Budget  
12 Committee that was comprised of members from the  
13 community, people from the Management ranks in the School  
14 District, and people from both Unions, both the Teachers  
15 Union and the Classified School Employees Union. And I  
16 found that, by having the budget committee, as well as the  
17 numerous other committees, that people felt like they were  
18 gaining information, and with that information they were  
19 able to go out and tell other people that, you know, the  
20 School District operates like this, this is why this is  
21 done, and they were sort of like my Ambassadors, if you  
22 will, and I just found that it worked very very well, so  
23 I've always felt the committees, task forces, panels,  
24 boards, worked very well in terms of educating people, and  
25 in terms of soliciting ideals and input. I don't think

1 any one person knows everything, but through the  
2 collective minds of many people, you can do great things.  
3 And throughout my career, I feel very good about the fact  
4 that the various committees that I either was on, or  
5 chaired, that we did great things.

6 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: These committees that you  
7 were on, the boards, were there any instances where you  
8 had to receive public comment to make decisions, or even  
9 where teachers had voices, or officials, or staff within  
10 the school, who were able to come and give their comments  
11 to you?

12 DR. MASON: Yes, and almost all of them, they were  
13 very open kinds of meetings. We had in terms of  
14 facilities, once when our School District passed a bond,  
15 we had a committee for that, and when you're talking about  
16 people pay more taxes, you bet, they want to come to those  
17 meetings and they want to be able to express their  
18 opinions. I probably have forgotten many of the  
19 committees that we had, but on almost all of them, they  
20 were almost always open meetings, open committee meetings,  
21 where people could come and just observe. They could  
22 come, they could offer public input. The Personnel  
23 Commission meetings are and were open to the public and we  
24 would frequently have employees who would come and express  
25 their opinions, as well as members of the public. So, the

1 outside committees that I was a member of, the Executive  
2 Committee for ASCEP, that was the Alliance of School  
3 Districts for Insurance, the Valley Insurance Programs,  
4 those meetings were open, we would have members from the  
5 public, members from other school districts that would  
6 come in and express their opinions. Those would need to  
7 be given due consideration, responses were needed, and  
8 obviously, in some cases where an item was not on the  
9 agenda, the Brown Act did not allow us to speak to those  
10 unless they were on the agenda, but we were able to  
11 respond appropriately, get matters agendized, and then, at  
12 the next meeting. So many many many of the committees,  
13 commissions, boards, that I was either on or was the  
14 Executive Officer to, did have public input, community  
15 employees, and others. So I am very well accustomed to  
16 and acquainted with that entire process.

17 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: And you mentioned that at  
18 least one of the commissions where you had - and you were  
19 abiding by the Brown Act, so you are familiar with the  
20 rules and regulations for that, correct?

21 DR. MASON: Yes, I am. Very much so. I know  
22 that, with this Commission, it's a different public  
23 meeting law that we would be dealing with, but I'm certain  
24 that there would be a lot of similarities between it and  
25 the Brown Act.

1 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: That was my last question.

2 Thank you.

3 DR. MASON: You're welcome.

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano.

5 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good afternoon.

6 DR. MASON: Good afternoon.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Would you like to drink some  
8 water?

9 DR. MASON: Thank you.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You're welcome. You  
11 mentioned earlier that, I believe it is your response to  
12 impartiality, that you have no prior redistricting  
13 experience, but you mentioned, as a School Chief Business  
14 Official, that you participated in the school attendance  
15 boundaries and the school busing boundaries. Is my  
16 understanding correct?

17 DR. MASON: That is correct.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you elaborate a little  
19 bit on that experience?

20 DR. MASON: Yes.

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

22 DR. MASON: This was way back in the dark ages  
23 before computers. I could only imagine that now, that  
24 whole process would be so much simpler than what we had to  
25 go through. I mean, I do recall using the rudimentary

1 forms of a spreadsheet program to help me with that.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you give me a time  
3 period?

4 DR. MASON: This would have been back in the late  
5 '80s -- '86, '87, '88. And, of course, what we were  
6 dealing with was redrawing or drawing district boundaries.  
7 We were dealing with parents. And most parents do not  
8 want to see change in terms of their child's school  
9 attendance, their home school. So we definitely had some  
10 issues that we had to deal with in terms of drawing those  
11 boundaries. Additionally, and most School Districts face  
12 this, you have other kinds of issues where, in the one  
13 district, nobody wanted their child to cross Errol  
14 Highway. Errol Highway was a very busy street that had a  
15 speed limit of 45 mph, so we had to deal with that. So we  
16 had those kinds of issues to deal with in terms of drawing  
17 District boundaries for schools. With busing, of course,  
18 you have the issue of everybody would like to have their  
19 child bused, but you cannot do that because buses are very  
20 expensive, and so you have to be able to draw those  
21 boundaries, you have to determine, you know, the capacity  
22 in terms of the buses that run, so you have all those  
23 kinds of issues that you are having to deal with, too.  
24 Some of the issues that might be transferable to drawing  
25 legislative boundaries, but on a much smaller scale, and

1 with some different kinds of considerations, but as you  
2 can tell, it's not a cut and dry kind of thing.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: No. So, when you started out  
4 drawing these boundaries, let's take the attendance  
5 boundaries, you looked at students attendance data, and  
6 you obviously spoke with parents. So you had public  
7 hearings? Or meetings?

8 DR. MASON: Yes, because, again, those decisions  
9 are ultimately made by the Governing Board.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: The Governing Board, okay.

11 DR. MASON: That's correct. So the staff gathers  
12 data, makes recommendations, begin to formulate certain  
13 recommendations, and those ultimately go to the School  
14 Governing Board. In between, when things are proposed and  
15 information is going out to parents, staff receives lots  
16 and lots of phone calls from parents, and my philosophy  
17 was that I would talk to each parent who called and spend  
18 whatever amount of time necessary to talk with that  
19 parent. And I felt it was important to do that, no matter  
20 how long it took, no matter how many calls, but it was  
21 important to be able to communicate with parents. And  
22 ultimately, on the busing issue, the board was quite  
23 surprised when we did not have - not one parent show up at  
24 the meeting where the board was adopted the revision and  
25 actually eliminating busing for a lot of students. There

1 was not one person who showed up at the meeting in  
2 protest.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Because they had spoken with  
4 you.

5 DR. MASON: Well, I will not take all of the  
6 credit for that, but I do think that the efforts of  
7 everyone that was involved in that process definitely paid  
8 dividends in terms of not having a big human cry at that  
9 board meeting.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So your role in these  
11 redrawing of the attendance boundaries and the busing  
12 issue, was to primarily communicate with the parents, and  
13 your other concerns?

14 DR. MASON: Well, I started with the initial data  
15 gathering process because you have to have data initially  
16 in order to formulate those kinds of recommendations to go  
17 to the board, so that was a big part of my role, looking  
18 at that, and then ultimately talking with parents, yes.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What's the extent of your  
20 analysis of the data? Do you recall, in what you did?

21 DR. MASON: I'm not sure I - well, we look at  
22 numbers, of course, you have to look at numbers, you have  
23 to look at how many students a school can house, what's  
24 the maximum number, because each school has a capacity,  
25 but then there might be some other issues that are looked

1 at. We found over the years that, even though you might  
2 have 20 classrooms, possibly only 16 of those can be used  
3 for a classroom because the needs at the school may  
4 dictate that some of those classrooms be used for some  
5 other things, so that you have to determine the capacity  
6 of the school, and you have to look at the numbers that  
7 are coming from the residences within the school  
8 attendance area, or within the District. So, you're  
9 looking at data in terms of the school capacity, and  
10 you're looking at numbers of students.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: When you looked at the busing  
12 issue and nobody showed up at the hearing to contest the  
13 boundaries, you said there were a lot of parents that were  
14 concerned, everybody really wanted their kid bused, and it  
15 was impossible to have that done. I imagine you had a lot  
16 of lengthy discussions with certain parents, and how do  
17 you convince these parents that either their kid is going  
18 to get bused, or it's not going to work? How did that go?

19 DR. MASON: Well, one of the first things that I  
20 would do was to start out by explaining to parents that  
21 the school district did not receive any additional money  
22 for busing the students in our district, and that district  
23 was a little unique from other districts because, when the  
24 district decided to bus, it had not been busing for years  
25 before. When it did decide to bus, it had not had any



1 prior year of busing, therefore there wasn't any separate  
2 money coming from the State to bus. So, the first thing I  
3 would do was to explain to parents that the District did  
4 not receive any money for busing, that any money that was  
5 spent on busing was taken out of the General Fund, and  
6 that the General Fund's purpose was to provide the  
7 educational program for students, and since all of us want  
8 the very best educational program for students, any money  
9 that was used for busing was being taken away from that  
10 and it was going to busing. So that was one of the first  
11 things, to give them some information and education them  
12 on the financial aspects of it. And then we worked from  
13 there. But most parents - no parent understood that, and  
14 that was a key thing, they did not understand that. Most  
15 parents thought that the District received money for  
16 busing. And once they understood that, and they  
17 understood why we didn't, then we worked through the rest  
18 of it. And that was a key thing, I felt. Most of those  
19 phone calls could take as long as 45 minutes. But, to me,  
20 it was important to explain to people why. And that's one  
21 of the things that I found in Personnel Administration and  
22 Business Administration, my answer may be no, but I'm  
23 going to tell you why. I want you to understand why I'm  
24 saying no to your request, or why I can't do that. And in  
25 most cases, I've found that reasonable people will

1 understand that. Now, maybe I've been very fortunate,  
2 dealing with reasonable people, but if people feel like  
3 they've been hurt, that they understand they have  
4 information they didn't have before, they still may not  
5 agree with it, but at least they have an understanding of  
6 why I've made the decision, or why this has to happen.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You are pretty successful at  
8 taking that reasonable approach, and people listen to you?

9 DR. MASON: I have been. I'm not sure sometimes  
10 why, but I have been.

11 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You're lucky.

12 DR. MASON: Yes, I think so. I hope my luck  
13 continues for the rest of my life.

14 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Can you tell me about perhaps  
15 the worst group experience or collaboration in a group  
16 that totally went wrong for you?

17 DR. MASON: I have had a few of those.  
18 Fortunately, they were many many many years ago, very  
19 early in my career, and I've learned from those, so I've  
20 not repeated those same mistakes. All of them go back to  
21 my early days when I worked for a municipality, and I  
22 guess the one that I'll share had to do with when I was  
23 doing training at the municipality, and this was back in  
24 the '70s. And I was doing cultural awareness and  
25 Affirmative Action training for all City employees, that

1 was the role and responsibility I had back then, and I  
2 made the decision to do the training for the Police and  
3 Fire Department separately from all other employee groups.  
4 All other employee groups had been scheduled in such a way  
5 that they spanned all different departments, so there was  
6 not one department only, they were scheduled that there  
7 were a mixture of employees. But, in order to accommodate  
8 Police and Fire, I determined that I would schedule them  
9 separately. Big mistake.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Why is that?

11 DR. MASON: Well, they were not especially  
12 responsive to that subject matter back then, this was --

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Cultural awareness, huh?

14 DR. MASON: Yes, Cultural Awareness and  
15 Affirmative Action.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: They weren't buying into it?

17 DR. MASON: They were not buying into it, not a  
18 bit.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Where was this at? Do you  
20 remember?

21 DR. MASON: This was the City of Pomona.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Pomona.

23 DR. MASON: Yes.

24 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What were the demographics,  
25 can you recall?

1 DR. MASON: The community at that time was  
2 probably 70 percent White, possibly 15 percent Hispanic,  
3 maybe about 8 percent Black, and 2 percent other. At that  
4 time, we had just barely started integrating the Fire  
5 Department. Up until about 1974, there had never been an  
6 African-American in the Fire Department. Of course, there  
7 were no women. The Police Department at that time had  
8 maybe just a very handful of Blacks and Hispanics, not  
9 very many, I think. There were maybe two Black police  
10 officers, maybe five Hispanics, one female. So both  
11 departments were not integrated very well, and had a  
12 history of problems.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: A history of problems in  
14 terms of --

15 DR. MASON: Not hiring.

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: -- not hiring, yeah. Was  
17 there such resistance to --

18 DR. MASON: There was a lot of resistance. The  
19 City at that time was under decree from the - and this was  
20 the FEPC, Fair Employment Practices Commission, it is now  
21 not that anymore, of course, but, see, I go back a long  
22 time. So we had some tremendous problems in that City,  
23 and we were under decree to do something about the hiring.  
24 I had just started with the City. And I was the City's  
25 Affirmative Action Officer, as well as in Personnel, but

1 that was one of the roles, one of the hats that I wore in  
2 that City, and one of the things that I determined needed  
3 to be done was to train employees on Affirmative Action,  
4 and on Cultural Awareness. As I said, the mistake that I  
5 believe I made was to schedule all of them together, so we  
6 had a lot of group think going on and they gave me hell.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How did it make you feel,  
8 being an African-American woman in this setting, facing  
9 their lack of embracing cultural diversity?

10 DR. MASON: Well, it was not a very good feeling,  
11 I can tell you that, but I asked for it, so I had no one  
12 to blame but myself. It was a very challenging period for  
13 me and it was one that, as I look back, was a disaster.  
14 Well, I shouldn't say it was a disaster, some of the  
15 evaluations and the input that I received back, and some  
16 of the people did apologize in writing, during the  
17 evaluations for, and I will not repeat what they said on  
18 that evaluation, but they knew what they were doing. So,  
19 it - I think that it did accomplish some good because I  
20 think they saw an African-American female in a situation  
21 that gave them something different, something new to look  
22 at, to reflect on. So I think it did accomplish  
23 something, but it was very tough. It was a very tough  
24 thing for me.

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yeah, I can imagine. Do you

1 believe that Equal Opportunity laws are still necessary?

2 DR. MASON: Yes, I do. We've come a long way, but  
3 we're not at the finish line yet.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Given this experience, as a  
5 Commissioner, how do you feel and how important is it to  
6 you that other Commissioners have this cultural awareness  
7 and diversity?

8 DR. MASON: I think it's very important because  
9 California is a very diverse State. I think there are  
10 maybe a couple other States that might be as close in  
11 diversity as California, but we are a very diverse. So, I  
12 think that the Commission needs to be reflective of that  
13 diversity and I think that the members of the Commission  
14 need to be very much aware, so that people will feel  
15 comfortable in expressing their views in the public  
16 hearings and that the Commissioners will take those into  
17 consideration as they begin to make their decisions.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

19 DR. MASON: You're welcome.

20 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Are there further  
21 questions, panelists?

22 CHAIR AHMADI: No.

23 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I just have a couple, Dr.  
24 Mason. You've worked both as a board member and for board  
25 members, as you mentioned. What did you learn that would

1 help you in selecting staff and directing staff?

2 DR. MASON: Well, I think that I know the  
3 difference between being a Commissioner and being a staff  
4 person, and I think it's important that the Commission  
5 does not cross that line in terms of being placed in the  
6 role of staff vs. being a Commissioner. So, what I  
7 learned, I think, would be very helpful in terms of being  
8 a Commissioner and knowing that distinction, as well, if  
9 we have staff that might be having difficulty with their  
10 role, being able to - a side - with the Commission, but to  
11 help them if they seem to have a problem or an issue with  
12 that kind of thing. But there's a definite difference in  
13 roles between a Commissioner and the staff person to a  
14 Commissioner, and those need to be respected.

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: So, how do you select  
16 people who recognize that, going in, and particularly in a  
17 circumstance like this where we may have Commissioners who  
18 really don't know much about the tasks that some staff  
19 members will be doing for them. How do you make sure that  
20 you select staff who recognize that they're not the  
21 decision-makers and their job is to give unbiased  
22 information that permits the Commission to make informed  
23 and legal decisions?

24 DR. MASON: I think you look for things in their  
25 background that show that they know the difference between

1 being staff and being a Commissioner, that they understand  
2 what their role is, and that they can comply with those  
3 differences, that they cannot take the place of a  
4 Commissioner, as the Commissioner is the one that actually  
5 makes the decision, that they provide the information and  
6 that they provide both sides to that information. So, I  
7 would hopefully be in a position to say, "No, we've heard  
8 this, but do we have all sides to it?" And get them to  
9 understand that their role is not to make the decisions or  
10 necessarily to lead the Commission down one path, but to  
11 make sure that we have the information we need in order to  
12 make the decision. So, looking at their background would  
13 be one way of doing it. The process of doing background  
14 checks, finding out if they're impartial, if they've had  
15 those kinds of experiences, what in their work history,  
16 their life history, has shown that they can do that.

17 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You talked a little bit  
18 about your travels. I think you said you had been to five  
19 Continents?

20 DR. MASON: Yes, I have.

21 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: What have your travels  
22 taught you about California?

23 DR. MASON: We have a lot of people from a lot of  
24 those Continents! It's also taught me that people are  
25 really more alike than they are unlike, in a sense. And



1 people are very open if you're very open to them. If you  
2 convey that you have a genuine interest, that you like  
3 them, that you want to find out more about them, that you  
4 want to listen to them, they're eager to talk to you.  
5 They're eager to acquaint themselves with you. So, I  
6 found that people all over the world and people here in  
7 California can be very friendly, very open and responsive  
8 to others if you're open and responsive to them.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Panelists, further  
10 questions?

11 CHAIR AHMADI: No.

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: No. We have about 19 and a  
13 half minutes remaining on the clock, Dr. Mason, if you  
14 care to make a closing statement.

15 DR. MASON: Yes, I would. Okay, first of all, I'd  
16 like to thank the Panel for this interview and to be under  
17 consideration for this all important task. I'm honored to  
18 have been selected as one of the 120 under consideration.  
19 I believe my work experience, education, life experiences,  
20 knowledge, skills, and abilities, would make me an  
21 excellent Commissioner. Having been a member of numerous  
22 committees over the years, served as the staff member to  
23 committees and commissions, I have an understanding of the  
24 role of a Commissioner. Even more than that, I have  
25 certain personality traits that I believe would be

1   invaluable to the Commission. These include discipline,  
2   task and goal oriented, focused, sense of humor, friendly,  
3   and approachable. Additionally, my educational and work  
4   experience backgrounds have provided me with the following  
5   that I believe will be invaluable to the Commission:  
6   Personnel and Human Resources skills, Business and  
7   Management skills, ability to understand and explain  
8   complex data and information in a manner that is  
9   understandable to all, and an ability to relate to all  
10  people.

11           I just want to add that, if selected, I would  
12  consider it an honor and a privilege to serve my fellow  
13  Californians on this very historic task. Thank you.

14           CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

15           PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

16           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you for coming to see  
17  us, Dr. Mason. Let's recess until 4:29.

18                   (Off the record at 3:58 p.m.)

19                   (Back on the record at 4:29 p.m.)

20           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: The hour being 4:29 and a  
21  quorum being present, we are ready to begin our next  
22  interview with Ms. Byrd Lochtie. Welcome, Ms. Lochtie.  
23  Are you ready to begin?

24           MS. LOCHTIE: Yes, I am. Thank you.

25           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Please start the clock.

1 What specific skills do you believe a good Commissioner  
2 should possess? Of those skills, which do you possess?  
3 Which do you not possess, and how will you compensate for  
4 it? Is there anything in your life that would prohibit or  
5 impair your ability to perform all of the duties of a  
6 Commissioner?

7 MS. LOCHTIE: Thank you. The first part, the  
8 skills that I believe all Commissioners should have first  
9 are communication skills, and what I mean by communication  
10 skills - listening skills, understanding, making people  
11 feel that they have been heard when you are communicating  
12 with them, and an ability to clarify statements or ask for  
13 clarification, if necessary. It also includes things like  
14 being able to understand body language and all kinds of  
15 communication, not just verbal. That is the most  
16 important skill, I believe. Other skills, being able to  
17 work as a team, being able to build a consensus with other  
18 people, organizational skills, facilitation skills, and  
19 for facilitation, I include being able to run a meeting,  
20 being able to facilitate and moderate a meeting so that  
21 everyone feels that they are being included, that they  
22 have a chance to speak, to give their viewpoint, and to  
23 have their viewpoint heard, to feel respected, and so  
24 forth. And also, in facilitation, to be able to summarize  
25 and clarify things so that, when decisions are made, the

1 points are all understood by everyone, and we hope that  
2 consensus can be reached.

3 Other skills that are necessary, statistical  
4 analysis, analyzing data, information and being able to  
5 use that data and that information toward making good  
6 decisions. I also believe you need leadership skills,  
7 particularly as a collaborative leader working with a  
8 group, whether you are the designated leader or not, being  
9 able to provide a leadership role if necessary.

10 I also think it to be very helpful for people if  
11 they speak a second language, computer skills, perhaps  
12 even more than just being able to use some computer skills  
13 for e-mail and so forth. And I believe that I have most  
14 of these skills. I do not speak a second language,  
15 although I have Rosetta Stone in Spanish and I am trying  
16 to learn that, it's a little hard for me, but I'm working  
17 on it. I feel that one of my weakest ones is probably  
18 statistical analysis, I'm able to take data and  
19 information and analyze it toward using it for making  
20 decisions, but I'm not a statistician and I believe that  
21 might be one of the areas where I'd be weakest. For  
22 compensating for that, there are people at Humboldt State  
23 University, I live in Eureka and that is close to me, and  
24 I have people there that would be able to help me with  
25 that kind of thing, and I would be willing to do that.

1 Oh, one more skill I think that anybody on this Commission  
2 needs is to be able to give your own opinion, even if  
3 you're in the minority, and to be able to express a  
4 disagreement in a way that is not disagreeable, but that  
5 moves the discussion forward towards a good solution for  
6 everyone. And there's nothing in my life that would  
7 prevent me from serving on the Commission if I were  
8 chosen.

9 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a circumstance  
10 from your personal experience where you had to work with  
11 others to resolve a conflict or a difference of opinion.  
12 Please describe the issue and describe your role in  
13 addressing and resolving the conflict. If you are  
14 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting  
15 Commission, tell us how you would resolve conflicts that  
16 may arise among the Commissioners.

17 MS. LOCHTIE: The situation that I'll describe has  
18 to do with my role in the League of Women Voters in  
19 Humboldt County. We conduct elections for independent  
20 groups and I am the Chair of the Committee that does that  
21 for our League. Recently, we did an election and one of  
22 the things that we have to do is to set up the ballot for  
23 the election, and there was some membership that disagreed  
24 with the way we put some things on the ballot, they wanted  
25 what they called a Constitutional Amendment, and it turned

1 out that, according to their Election Ordinance, what they  
2 had actually presented to us was an Initiative. And they  
3 have different results.

4           We had to conduct a meeting of the membership, I  
5 facilitated that meeting, I planned the agenda for it, I  
6 set up the people who needed to be there, including legal  
7 counsel for the group, and I allowed everyone to speak, to  
8 say why they were unhappy with this, and what they thought  
9 it had said, and so forth. And we were able to go through  
10 the whole ballot and the things that they were unhappy  
11 with, and resolve those issues based on new understanding,  
12 for them, of what their Election Ordinance says, and what  
13 their Constitution said. And I would say that we had some  
14 very specific results from that, that I found  
15 exceptionally good. They really - they came out with an  
16 understanding of the way the issues were presented, they  
17 had a feeling that their concerns had been addressed, a  
18 better understanding of their own governance process, and  
19 a realization that the League was not trying to tell them  
20 how to vote, or to be part of their election, only  
21 following their Constitution and their Election Ordinance  
22 to make it the best election possible for them.

23           And I believe that the process we used is one that  
24 can be used any time, and I would use it if there were  
25 conflicts arising on the Redistricting Commission, where

1 you look at the problem, and you decide why there is a  
2 problem, and how you need to resolve that conflict,  
3 develop a process, including getting the possible  
4 information that you need for it, all the facts, and  
5 determining a process of making a decision about that  
6 conflict, and then following through with a discussion and  
7 coming up with a resolution to the conflict. I also think  
8 it is very important that, during that process, everyone  
9 understands that it may be an extremely difficult process,  
10 and that you may not ever come to a consensus on specific  
11 points, because people are going to have different ideas,  
12 and conflicts do arise.

13 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How will the Commission's  
14 work impact the State? Which of these impacts will  
15 improve the State the most? Is there any potential for  
16 the Commission's work to harm the State, and if so, in  
17 what ways?

18 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, I believe the first impact is  
19 that, if the voters and the people of California feel that  
20 they have been heard, that they've been listened to, that  
21 their concerns have been addressed, and that districts  
22 have been drawn in a fair and equitable way, that this  
23 will help everyone in the State to respect our Government  
24 more, to feel more trust in what's happening in the State,  
25 and to believe that they really do have a chance to make a

1 difference in the State. There are some other things that  
2 I think can happen that might stimulate more interest in  
3 registering and voting if the trust is improved, and there  
4 is a better feeling of what our government is doing for  
5 people. It might reduce some of the gridlock, although  
6 that might not happen either. It could force some  
7 candidates to move because of the residents might end up  
8 being somewhere other than they expected it to be, and I  
9 think it could also be - stimulate more registration and  
10 more voting.

11 I believe some of the potential for harm, the  
12 first one probably is if the Commission does a bad job, or  
13 doesn't do the job at all, if the Commission does not give  
14 the people the feeling that, yes, they are being heard,  
15 that this is a fair process, and it is not being done as a  
16 political process, I think that is very important; if that  
17 doesn't happen, then I think people will be very very  
18 disturbed and they will have even less trust, and it will  
19 be even worse than it is right now. There are a couple of  
20 other things that maybe actually are happening now, there  
21 is an awful lot of party bickering, there are lawsuits and  
22 those kinds of things, we could have more of those if the  
23 Commission is not seen as having done a good job. And  
24 some areas might lose a powerful incumbent because of  
25 redistricting, and they might feel that they lose



1 influence because it's an elected staff making decision,  
2 instead of their elected official. Those are things,  
3 though, that we do see because of term limits, and so it  
4 may not be something that we don't already know about.

5 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Describe a situation where  
6 you have had to work as a part of a group to achieve a  
7 common goal, tell us about the goal, describe your role  
8 within the group, and tell us how the group worked or did  
9 not work collaboratively to achieve this goal. If you are  
10 selected to serve on the Citizens Redistricting  
11 Commission, tell us what you would do to foster  
12 collaboration among the Commissioners and ensure the  
13 Commission meets its legal deadlines.

14 MS. LOCHTIE: Thank you. The situation that I'd  
15 like to talk about is, it was a collaborative effort of a  
16 number of nonprofits and government agencies working with  
17 senior citizens and with disabled people, including the  
18 AIDS and the in-home health workers who were coming into  
19 people's homes to assist seniors and disabled. There are  
20 a number of organizations, both nonprofits and government  
21 agencies in Humboldt County, that were working on this  
22 kind of thing, but they were all working in somewhat  
23 different ways and there was a great feeling that there  
24 was no continuity or no way of ensuring that they were all  
25 trained in the same way, no consistency in the

1 requirements, and so forth. I was hired to be the  
2 facilitator for this new collaboration with the intent  
3 that there was going to be a result that had to do with  
4 training these people to work, in-home care workers. I  
5 set the agendas, I worked with the leaders of each one of  
6 these groups to be sure that everybody was represented and  
7 they felt that they were having a chance to participate.  
8 We set up guidelines of how the meetings would go. I  
9 insisted that they address the elephant that was in the  
10 room, which happened to be turf, everybody's turf, nobody  
11 wanted to give up anything.

12           We worked for about 18 months, meeting at least  
13 once a month, sometimes twice a month, we brought in  
14 different experts and so forth, and the result was that  
15 they did come up with a collaborative effort to have  
16 training and registration of people who were qualified to  
17 work in the home situations.

18           I would use much of the same process for  
19 collaboration, and I do it with any group that I work with  
20 because I believe the process is an important part of it.  
21 The first thing is, of course, to have agendas and to have  
22 some guidelines as to behavior within the meetings, and  
23 how people will treat one another, and how you will  
24 address things like the elephant in the corner. And that  
25 would be how I would try to work with this group. I

1 realize that if I were in the group, I might not be the  
2 leader of the group, but I still think that I would have  
3 some ideas of how the leadership of the group would be  
4 able to put together guidelines and agendas, and so forth,  
5 to move the process ahead the way we would want it to move  
6 ahead.

7 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: A considerable amount of  
8 the Commission's work will involve meeting with people  
9 from all over California who come from very different  
10 backgrounds and very different perspectives. If you were  
11 selected to serve on the Commission, tell us about the  
12 specific skills you possess that will make you effective  
13 in interacting with the public.

14 MS. LOCHTIE: Thank you. Well, first of all, I  
15 like people. I like meeting new people and I particularly  
16 like people who come from a background that is different  
17 from mine, that have different ideas about things, that I  
18 can talk with them about things so that I can learn new  
19 things, and so forth. So that is something I enjoy doing  
20 and I think I do pretty well. I think it's because I have  
21 good communication skills and I do try to listen to what  
22 other people are saying and how they're saying it. I did  
23 spend some time in Honduras a few years back, and I didn't  
24 speak more than about six words of Spanish, but I found  
25 that, by listening to people and observing them, and if I

1 knew what the topic was about, I could get a pretty good  
2 sense of what people were saying, and I really have tried  
3 very hard to develop my skill in reading other people and  
4 understanding them even if they don't speak my language,  
5 whether it's English or another language. And I also - I  
6 respect other people and I hope I portray that through  
7 everything that I say and do with people. I like to find  
8 out about different cultures, and people, and different  
9 ideas. I enjoy people of all ages, from young children to  
10 any age, and I think, again, I appreciate the differences.  
11 I am sensitive to people's differences and appreciate  
12 them, rather than see them as something that should divide  
13 us. I think there are things that can unite us when there  
14 are differences. Let's see if I wanted to add anything  
15 more to that. Oh, I think I am an optimistic person and I  
16 think that helps in meeting new people. I have a positive  
17 attitude about things. I am told I have a lot of energy  
18 and that I'm enthusiastic, and I believe that I am. And I  
19 believe that, in meeting people in this particular  
20 situation, the fact that I have no political ambitions of  
21 any sort and would not even consider running for any of  
22 these positions, I think that is an important thing for  
23 anybody who is on the Commission, that it not be a hidden  
24 agenda for anybody.

25 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Mr. Ahmadi.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. Good afternoon, Ms.  
2 Lochtie.

3 MS. LOCHTIE: Thank you.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Going back to your last response to  
5 question 5 -

6 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

7 CHAIR AHMADI: You like people, especially those  
8 who have different backgrounds than yours. Assuming that  
9 you are one of the Commissioners and it's January 1 of  
10 2011 - or January 2 of 2011 - where would you go first to  
11 meet these people, or how would that interest of yours to  
12 meet with people help you in your decision where to go and  
13 how to interact with which group of people?

14 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, I would think in terms of the  
15 Commission that the Commission itself would have to set up  
16 some framework of how the Commissioners are going to be  
17 going out to areas in the State to ask about people's  
18 ideas, people's desires, the commonalities of different  
19 groups. I am willing to go to other parts of the State.  
20 I have been a number of places in the State, but certainly  
21 not every place, but I am definitely willing to go and to  
22 meet people in that way. I don't think that I would just  
23 jump out and say I'm going to run all over the State to go  
24 meet people because I'm on the Commission, I think it  
25 would be much more important to follow the framework of

1 whatever the Commission decides is how they're going to do  
2 this.

3 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you. In your response to  
4 standard question 4, you mention about your experience  
5 facilitating this long meeting between nonprofits and the  
6 government agencies and recipients of certain benefits, at  
7 home care givers.

8 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: And you mentioned that it took 18  
10 months to come to consensus about how to collaborate all  
11 these resources to care for the people who needed it. Do  
12 you think - well, why 18 months? What was some of - to  
13 me, personally, it sounds a little long. What were some  
14 of the obstacles? I am sure that you had challenges in  
15 meeting - you said once a week?

16 MS. LOCHTIE: No, once a month.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Once a month?

18 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes, that was the biggest obstacle  
19 that the members of the groups were only willing to meet  
20 once a month, they were all doing this as a part of their  
21 jobs, and there were only certain times when they could  
22 all get together, and we felt that it was important that  
23 the whole group be there, at least in the first six to  
24 eight meetings, because we found, actually, the first two  
25 meetings, that a number of people came the first meeting

1 and some of them didn't come back the second time, and  
2 others did, and we had to re-do things, and so we set it  
3 up so that every agency was represented at every meeting,  
4 even if it wasn't the same person every time, but every  
5 agency was represented. I know it sounds like a long  
6 time, it was a long time. These were people who did not  
7 agree with one another, who saw their turf as the only one  
8 that was right, and, as I say, that was the elephant in  
9 the room, and it was a difficult situation to deal with,  
10 but we eventually did deal with it because we addressed  
11 that.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: Yeah, I agree if you put it on a  
13 time scale, you know, 18 months, it sounds kind of long,  
14 but if you meet once a month, it is actually within 18  
15 meetings, correct?

16 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: Who were these governmental  
18 agencies and these nonprofit organizations?

19 MS. LOCHTIE: The nonprofits, there were two of  
20 the Area One Agency on Aging and the Humboldt Resource  
21 Center, and then there were some smaller ones that dealt  
22 with, well, they were called "caregivers," but they were  
23 smaller groups that were nonprofits that had been formed  
24 to provide this service. Then, the Government services  
25 were mostly the County services, In-Home Health Services,

1 and the Regional Center, and I don't remember all of them,  
2 but there were close to 15 different agencies involved in  
3 this.

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Any State or Federal agencies?

5 MS. LOCHTIE: Excuse me?

6 CHAIR AHMADI: Any State or Federal agencies?

7 MS. LOCHTIE: I guess the North Coast Regional  
8 Center was probably State, and the Area One Agency, I  
9 guess that is Federal, isn't it?

10 CHAIR AHMADI: Which one?

11 MS. LOCHTIE: Area One Agency on Aging -

12 CHAIR AHMADI: To be honest, I don't know.

13 MS. LOCHTIE: -- there is probably a State  
14 component to that, also.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay. Thank you.

16 MS. LOCHTIE: Thank you.

17 CHAIR AHMADI: When you were discussing, again,  
18 response to question 2, you mentioned election for the  
19 independent groups.

20 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Who are these groups?

22 MS. LOCHTIE: Some are Native-American Tribes and  
23 some are nonprofits.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, so not like community  
25 organizations or -



1 MS. LOCHTIE: We have not - well, one is a  
2 community organization, it is a nonprofit, it is our  
3 Access Humboldt, it is the public channels on Cable  
4 Television, you know - Education, Government, and Public  
5 where they show different - the County Board of  
6 Supervisors Meetings, and they show a lot of public forums  
7 and that kind of thing, but it is a nonprofit and they had  
8 an election that we ran for them.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you.

10 MS. LOCHTIE: Thank you.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: When you were describing the impact  
12 that the Commission's work will have on the State,  
13 specifically when you were describing the harms, or the  
14 potential harms, you mentioned something about, well, let  
15 me step back - I believe you mentioned that one of the  
16 positive impacts would be to reduce the gridlock.

17 MS. LOCHTIE: Reduce.

18 CHAIR AHMADI: Reduce it. But then you mentioned  
19 something about that might not happen.

20 MS. LOCHTIE: That's right.

21 CHAIR AHMADI: Could you share with us your ideas  
22 what will cause it not to happen, or what did you mean by  
23 that?

24 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, the gridlock, I think, well,  
25 it isn't just the Districts that are causing gridlock, I

1 think that is one part of it, and if things worked the way  
2 we might want them to, to be ideal, we might reduce  
3 gridlock, but I also think that there is a possibility  
4 that it could increase gridlock just because people get  
5 mad and don't like what happened. So, it's a political  
6 partisan thing, rather than the actual Districts  
7 themselves.

8 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you. Based on your  
9 application material, in your role with the Girl Scouts,  
10 you were involved with the Council for the Girl Scouts.

11 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

12 CHAIR AHMADI: You were evaluating properties that  
13 cover a wide geographic area.

14 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

15 CHAIR AHMADI: And I believe that you must  
16 consider the demographic and geographic of the property,  
17 as well as the whole Council in making decisions as part  
18 of that involvement.

19 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: If selected as a Commissioner, what  
21 insights might this experience give you on the  
22 Redistricting Commission? What values do you bring to the  
23 Commission from this experience?

24 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, first of all, looking at all  
25 the data and being able to compare the data in a way that

1 you could put on a grid, for example, and look at what is  
2 most important, or how things are different for each  
3 property. But, even more, I think is the realization of  
4 how difficult something like this is to do because of  
5 people's emotions and their own commitment to something  
6 that they have an emotional tie to. It isn't always the  
7 facts that people see, they see their emotions, and I  
8 think it's important to be able to listen to the emotions  
9 and to respect those, and let people know that you're  
10 hearing that, but also to take the facts and the data that  
11 you have, and be able to use that and maybe not have to  
12 consider an emotional issue at every point because you may  
13 not be able to do that, there are going to be so much  
14 emotion involved in all of this, that you might need to  
15 say, "Yes, we understand that, but this is the way we're  
16 going to have to do it because of the criteria that we're  
17 given, we have to have these numbers, we have to do this,"  
18 kind of thing. And that's going to be, to me, I think  
19 maybe I didn't say this in one of the potential harms, is  
20 that if people see this and they feel that they haven't  
21 been heard, and they don't like the results, then that's  
22 going to be very harmful. A benefit could be that, if  
23 they feel they have been heard, even though their specific  
24 one little thing that they said, "We must have this," if  
25 it didn't happen, they understand the difficulty of what

1 the Commission is going to have to do to put this all  
2 together and make it work for everybody in the best  
3 possible way. Not everybody is going to be happy with  
4 everything that happens, and I think you have to  
5 understand that and the Commission has to have broad  
6 enough shoulders to say, "We have to be able to make the  
7 best decision we can, even though not everybody is going  
8 to like everything we do."

9 CHAIR AHMADI: The timeframe is short for the  
10 redistricting, and there are a lot of things to do within  
11 this short time. How would you ensure, or how would you  
12 go about giving people the feeling that they have been  
13 heard? What is the best approach? Do you think it's  
14 possible that you will hear from every single resident of  
15 California? Or, how would you manage that? How would you  
16 ensure that they are heard?

17 MS. LOCHTIE: No, you're not going to hear from  
18 every single person, but I do believe that the open  
19 process - I think that what you've done here has opened  
20 the door for doing this kind of process. You have  
21 everything as open meetings, you have made the whole  
22 process very clear to everyone, anyone who is interested  
23 in knowing about it can see exactly what's happening and  
24 doing it, and I think, following those guidelines would be  
25 a way that the Commission could begin to do this in the

1 best possible way. I do believe that Commissioners will  
2 have to travel to different places because I don't think  
3 that it should just be one Commissioner calling a meeting,  
4 a town meeting, or whatever, in an area. I think it  
5 probably should be at least two doing that, so people are  
6 going to have to travel. And I believe that is one of the  
7 things that I would consider a given if I were on the  
8 Commission.

9 CHAIR AHMADI: Do you like traveling?

10 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes, I do.

11 CHAIR AHMADI: Great, thanks. You are on the  
12 Board of Directors of the Latino Net?

13 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: What is the mission of the Latino  
15 Net?

16 MS. LOCHTIE: It is to improve the quality of life  
17 for Spanish-speaking people in Humboldt County and to help  
18 them feel a part of the wider community. That is why  
19 there are people who are not Latinos on the Board of  
20 Directors. I was elected to the Board of Directors. And  
21 the feeling is that we're not trying to isolate any group  
22 of people, we are trying to assimilate them in the best  
23 possible way, into the total community of Humboldt County,  
24 and valuing their culture and their desires, but also  
25 helping them to value the cultures of their new country.

1           CHAIR AHMADI: Can you describe for us some of the  
2 ways that you do this?

3           MS. LOCHTIE: We have advocated for interpreters  
4 and translators for people who need that, particularly in  
5 medical areas, that is how it began, because of many  
6 medical services that people were having trouble  
7 understanding because there were not interpreters. And  
8 that has expanded to Humboldt County Government and to  
9 School Districts, and so forth. There has been a great  
10 deal of emphasis on working with Spanish-speaking people,  
11 there are a couple of Spanish emergent schools, and Latino  
12 Net advocates for those things and says, "Yes, we hope you  
13 will be doing these." We also have participation in the  
14 Bi-National Health Week, and we have our Latino Net Health  
15 Fair, which is a fair, it's a festival, and it is also a  
16 place where people can get information about all of the  
17 services that are available to community people, not just  
18 Spanish-speaking, but anybody in our community, and there  
19 are also some health services given, testing for  
20 cholesterol and testing for glucose, diabetes, and a lot  
21 of information given out, plus there's a band, and there  
22 are drawings, and it's a fun thing, and it isn't just the  
23 Spanish community that is invited, it is open to the whole  
24 public. And we're trying to get some integration, get  
25 people talking with one another and knowing one another.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Sure. Do you think some of these  
2 approaches might be applicable to the Commission?

3 MS. LOCHTIE: Yeah, do we want to have a party?!  
4 Yes, I think talking with people and listening to them is  
5 the way that the Commission is going to have to work.

6 CHAIR AHMADI: You mentioned that there are not  
7 only Latinos, but other groups. Can you name a few? Like  
8 who are participating in this program? Which other  
9 groups?

10 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, they - all the groups that are  
11 participating provide services to the community, and they  
12 also - I mean, they try to provide services to Spanish-  
13 speaking people by having interpreters or translations of  
14 things, and so forth. The groups that are involved, there  
15 are health groups, there are community groups, the League  
16 of Women Voters is involved, the Human Rights Commission  
17 is involved, Planned Parenthood is involved. There are  
18 probably 30 or more different nonprofits and government  
19 groups that are involved.

20 CHAIR AHMADI: So it is like a network of all  
21 these organizations, like community organizations -

22 MS. LOCHTIE: It is exactly a network, and the  
23 idea is for these groups to network and provide  
24 information to Spanish-speaking people, but also to  
25 connect them with the wider community.

1 CHAIR AHMADI: Okay, thank you so much. No more  
2 questions at this point.

3 MS. LOCHTIE: Thank you.

4 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Camacho.

5 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. Hello, Ms.  
6 Lochtie.

7 MS. LOCHTIE: Hello.

8 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: On - I just have one follow-  
9 up question regarding Latino Net. Is there any Latinos on  
10 the Board?

11 MS. LOCHTIE: Oh, yes. There's a nine-member Board  
12 - no, excuse me, an 11-member - and I believe six of them  
13 are Latino, and maybe seven now. There was just an  
14 election.

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So there is very good  
16 representation there?

17 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

18 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. When I was looking at  
19 your employment history, I saw a couple of - I'm not sure  
20 if they're contracts or jobs, and I just wanted to get a  
21 little clarification. Both of them are for the Humboldt  
22 Area Foundation?

23 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Are those jobs and then you  
25 are also a consultant? Or are those two contracts? Help



1 me understand, please?

2 MS. LOCHTIE: I know, it's very confusing because  
3 I have quite a bit of affiliation with Humboldt Area  
4 Foundation. It is a community foundation. And my first  
5 commitment to them is my family has a fund there in memory  
6 of my husband, and it is a donor-advised fund, and they  
7 propose grants and we can say, yes, we would like that  
8 grant to go, whatever. I am also listed on their resource  
9 list of consultants that list what I do as a consultant  
10 and my contact information. They do not recommend any of  
11 the people on their resources, they just list them. They  
12 provide grants to nonprofits, particularly in the area of  
13 governance, board roles and responsibilities, fundraising,  
14 and strategic planning. And my focus is usually the  
15 governance and strategic planning, those are the two that  
16 I do, mostly. What happens is the nonprofit hires me -  
17 they get a grant from Humboldt Area Foundation to hire a  
18 consultant, they hire me as a consultant, and then they  
19 turn their bill into Humboldt Area Foundation and, from  
20 the grant that they told them they could have, they pay  
21 me. And that is why it looks as though I get a lot of  
22 money from them, and it is actually for individual  
23 consulting jobs for different nonprofits that I work for.  
24 I am also - I was hired by Humboldt Area Foundation,  
25 itself, as a consultant to work with them on a fund that

1 was set up just as my donor-advised fund was set up, they  
2 have many many funds that people have set up to do  
3 specific things in the community, and this one was to work  
4 on spaying unwanted - you know, reducing the number of  
5 unwanted dogs and cats in the community by spaying and  
6 neutering the dogs and cats. My husband was a  
7 Veterinarian and I have many skills in facilitation, and I  
8 was hired to work with the Veterinary population and the  
9 Animal Welfare population to see if we could come to some  
10 agreement on how this fund would be set up, who would  
11 administer it - the Humboldt Area Foundation administers  
12 it, but who would actually give out the vouchers and how  
13 this would all work. And I did that as a consultant,  
14 worked with them on that, and I am retained as a  
15 consultant because this is an ongoing process and things  
16 pop up, in fact, I had a phone call just 10 minutes before  
17 I left home yesterday to drive down here, about this. And  
18 so I - it's not a lot of consulting now because it is all  
19 set up and it works pretty well, but things pop up and I  
20 deal with them.

21 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Okay. During your time on  
22 the Eureka School District Board of Trustees, you dealt  
23 with district reconfiguration --

24 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: -- and school closures.

1 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

2 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Can you elaborate on your  
3 involvement in both of the decisions?

4 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, they were board decisions.  
5 And, again, we set up a good process, I believe, because  
6 we held our meetings. Of course, we were under the Brown  
7 Act, so any meetings that we had were open meetings and we  
8 had forums that were set up so that people could talk  
9 about whether they thought a school should be closed and,  
10 if not, why not, and so forth. And, again, this was the  
11 same kind of thing. You get a lot of emotion involved in  
12 this, and so we did - we listened to people, we gave them  
13 a chance to talk, and then we looked at all the facts and  
14 figures that we had, and the money that was available,  
15 that had to be stretched over certain schools and so  
16 forth. We also did quite a bit of research into  
17 configurations of schools because we were looking at  
18 possibly closing Middle School - it was a Junior High  
19 School at the time, and possibly changing from a 7/8/9,  
20 10/11/12 schools, to a 6/7/8 and a 9-12 school, and we did  
21 a lot of research and that kind of thing. I did a little  
22 bit of traveling to go to areas that were using different  
23 configurations like Middle School, 5/6/7/8, and that kind  
24 of thing, and that was my involvement in the run-up to the  
25 decision. And, of course, the decision, the final

1 decision was the responsibility of the Board and had to be  
2 made that way.

3 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Did you have staff that  
4 collected some of the data for you and to help guide you  
5 on how the maps should look? Or did the Board have input?

6 MS. LOCHTIE: The Board had input, but, yes, there  
7 was a lot of staff involved in this, there had to be.  
8 Board members are unpaid volunteers, I guess is what you'd  
9 say, so most people had another job, as well. So, the  
10 staff of the School District was very important in putting  
11 together different - the data that we needed, the numbers  
12 - actually, the numbers of potential students, we had to  
13 look at the Kindergarten for what was going to happen six  
14 years later in the Junior High, and all of those kinds of  
15 things, and all of that data came from the staff.

16 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You kind of talked a little  
17 bit about parent or public input. What was that to the  
18 Trustees? Or was it at their meetings? Or was it to  
19 staff? Could you kind of elaborate on that process?

20 MS. LOCHTIE: It was at meetings and we did set up  
21 some very specific meetings just for that, they were not -  
22 we were not making decisions at that meeting, the agenda  
23 was just for input, a public hearing kind of thing, where  
24 we just had comments from the public about everything. We  
25 also got a lot of written comments, stacks of written

1 comments, which we all looked at very carefully and tried  
2 to take into consideration as we were making our  
3 decisions.

4 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: How did you take the  
5 information that staff provided you and this input that  
6 you received from parents or the community, to integrate  
7 that into the new lines for the schools?

8 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, I'm a great one for having a  
9 matrix, and I would set up everything that I felt I was  
10 hearing from the public and that I was seeing in the data  
11 that was collected, and also hearing from staff because  
12 staff had input in terms of the general input, not just  
13 the figures that they collected for us, but their thoughts  
14 also, because when you're dealing with people that you've  
15 hired to help you, you need to listen to them, as well.  
16 Then, I would make my own matrix of everything that I  
17 thought was important and set up in my own mind the value  
18 of things, to me, and then I would set up my matrix and  
19 come up with where I thought the decisions needed to be  
20 made. But then there was also discussion with the rest of  
21 the Board and not everything that I thought was the way it  
22 should be done was exactly what happened. It never is.

23 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: So, when the announcements of  
24 the school closures and the drawing of these new lines,  
25 did the community and the parents have a better

1 understanding since this process was provided, and so  
2 there was less outcry when they saw what was being  
3 presented?

4 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes and no, because one of the  
5 things that happened was that we did do a lot of  
6 announcing of things, and held things, but when the  
7 announcement was on the agenda for a decision to be made,  
8 or to look at it, and then the decision be made at the  
9 next meeting, that's when people paid attention. A lot of  
10 people did pay attention and came to the meetings that we  
11 had for discussion and input, but not everybody did, and  
12 many of the ones who were extremely vocal didn't get into  
13 the process until it was getting toward the end of the  
14 process. So, again, we had to explain what we had done  
15 and why we were doing it, and what had come before. And  
16 some people will never accept that because they didn't pay  
17 attention at the beginning. But I think most people did.  
18 And I think, in many cases, there were parents who  
19 recognized that their emotions were tied in to a specific  
20 school, but their reality was that they could see that a  
21 decision had to be made and it was a better decision to  
22 close their school, even though they didn't want it,  
23 because they could see that we had gone through a pretty  
24 intensive process to do it.

25 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Obviously, there are

1 similarities in this because, when you go to the public  
2 meetings, not everyone is going to be there. From this  
3 lesson that you've learned through these, being a Board  
4 Trustee, what do you think the Commission could do to  
5 bring more people or get more people involved into this  
6 process?

7 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, I think there are some things  
8 that can be done, and that is the way that you announce  
9 these things, the kind of media that you use, I am not  
10 young enough to be what my daughter calls a "native" on  
11 the computer, but I do know a little bit about the  
12 computer, and we have - it seems every day there is a new  
13 way of getting information out there, and I think the  
14 Commission would have to be very proactive in using all of  
15 the technology that's available to us, to tell people  
16 about what's happening. Now, just because we tell them  
17 does not mean that they are going to come, and that  
18 they're not going to complain if they didn't come, because  
19 we know human beings. But, I think that there are ways of  
20 getting it out there that are, in addition to just the  
21 radio, television, and newspaper, that we have relied on  
22 for so many years, and I think we do need to use those.  
23 Young people use Facebook and Twitter and all these other  
24 things that I probably don't know the name of yet, but I  
25 do think that is something we would need to look at and to

1 use as effectively as we could. I also think that talking  
2 with groups that are in the community, such as - well, the  
3 League of Women Voters, or Latino Net, or the Human Rights  
4 Commission that I'm on, if all of those groups were given  
5 the information that this is going to happen, they would  
6 try to get somebody, at least one person there, to give  
7 input, and to provide a voice for their group, so there  
8 are many groups - Chambers of Commerce have lists and  
9 lists of groups of people in communities, and I think that  
10 is one thing that you would need to do to try to get the  
11 information out to as many people as you possibly could,  
12 and encourage them to come or to send a representative who  
13 would be able to tell the Commission what that group is  
14 feeling and thinking.

15 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: You stated that you are in  
16 charge of conducting Tribal elections for the Bear River  
17 Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria. What have you learned  
18 from this experience that would help you as a  
19 Commissioner?

20 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, I've learned a great deal.  
21 I've learned about another culture that is very very  
22 different from mine, and I've learned a great deal about  
23 governance in different groups. Their governance is maybe  
24 not exactly like ours, although there are many  
25 similarities and I've learned how to communicate with them



1 in a way that is respectful and that generates their  
2 respect for our League. They do hire us, they trust us to  
3 conduct a good election for them, which I think is a very  
4 high level of trust and respect, and I believe that we  
5 have learned how to communicate with them in a way that  
6 generates all that. And I think that is very important no  
7 matter what group you are working with, there are going to  
8 be people, maybe not a different culture as in Native-  
9 Americans, but in different ideas, different areas, for  
10 example - agricultural areas, urban areas, rural areas,  
11 all of these things are going to be different and people  
12 are going to have different ideas. It comes back down, I  
13 think, to showing respect and generating respect.

14 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: Thank you. That was my last  
15 question.

16 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Ms. Spano.

17 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good afternoon.

18 MS. LOCHTIE: Good afternoon.

19 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Would you like some water?  
20 Are you okay?

21 MS. LOCHTIE: I'm all right, thank you.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Good. What are Tribal  
23 elections like?

24 MS. LOCHTIE: Tribal elections are only for tribal  
25 members and, in our area, some of the members live in the

1 area, and some live all over the country. So there are  
2 absentee ballots that are sent out and then there's an  
3 election day where the polls are open, and what the League  
4 does is it conducts the whole thing, we send out all the  
5 absentee ballots, we collect them in a special post office  
6 box for elections, and then they're kept in a locked box  
7 until the day of the election. At the end of that day, we  
8 count the ballots that have been turned in that day and we  
9 open and count the absentee ballots. And we - they come  
10 with their tribal card to show that they're a tribal  
11 member and vote.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Do they have like an  
13 identification --

14 MS. LOCHTIE: They have an identification card.  
15 They're not required to have it, it's not required, but  
16 they usually have it. We have a contract with, or not  
17 really a contract, but an agreement with our County  
18 Elections Board to borrow a couple of polling booths, you  
19 know, the suitcase ones, so that they have secret -  
20 privacy for their voting, and it's conducted just like a  
21 regular election.

22 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Okay. In your capacity, do  
23 you hear the different issues that they're talking about?  
24 Or concerns?

25 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, it's Tribal Council Elections

1 and issues, yes.

2 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Well, what are their issues,  
3 in your experience?

4 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, they have to do with their  
5 governance, and I'm reluctant to talk about their specific  
6 issues. Part of my feeling about this is that this is  
7 their culture, and they're not here for me to say, "May I  
8 talk about your issues?" So, if you don't mind, I'd  
9 rather not. I can say that they had to do with  
10 Constitutional Amendments sometimes, and sometimes  
11 initiatives.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How important is it for them  
13 to have a voice in this process of redistricting?

14 MS. LOCHTIE: It's important because they vote in  
15 California, as well as on their Tribal Elections. So,  
16 they are members of California, voting public. So it  
17 would be very important for them to be heard, as well.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How do you propose going out  
19 reaching this segment of the population as the  
20 Redistricting Commission does its outreach efforts?

21 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, I think it will be done, for  
22 example, in Humboldt County, be reaching out in the same  
23 ways that we would be reaching out to all aspects of the  
24 community. I don't think that we should be targeting  
25 specific ethnic groups, or specific cultural groups, I

1 think we want to hear from communities and, if they're  
2 part of a wider community, then I think we need to - the  
3 whole community needs to be invited and included in that.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: How did you get involved with  
5 Latino Net?

6 MS. LOCHTIE: I did because I was originally the  
7 representative from the League of Women Voters. We have  
8 Spanish language materials and I was asked by my Board,  
9 the League Board, to go to the meeting and find out what  
10 it was about, and I made some really good friends, and I  
11 really liked it, and I continue to be part of that.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: So you worked 47 years at the  
13 Broadway Animal Hospital. Is this with your husband?

14 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You were a Bookkeeper and  
16 Accountant. Is this why you started working there?

17 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

18 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Are there any differences in  
19 the kinds of pets that you saw in the '60s compared to  
20 today?

21 MS. LOCHTIE: Oh, good gracious, everything is  
22 very very different. Well, the whole veterinary  
23 profession is very different because it is far more  
24 scientific. The kinds of surgeries that are done and the  
25 kinds of medicine that is practiced, it's just mushroomed

1 the way human medicine has. So it's very different. And  
2 the prices are very different from what they were.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: The prices?

4 MS. LOCHTIE: Very different from when we first  
5 started, yes.

6 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Oh, I do know that. You were  
7 describing earlier your consultant roles.

8 MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: And I noticed in your  
10 application, you have services as part of your Board  
11 retreats? You mentioned Board retreats. Maybe you could  
12 expand on that a little bit.

13 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, a Board retreat usually is a  
14 time that a Board decides they are going to spend a day,  
15 or sometimes even a day and a half, it usually comes about  
16 because they want a strategic plan, and my experience with  
17 boards has been that, in most cases, boards who are asking  
18 for a strategic plan really don't know how to govern yet,  
19 they don't know what their role is as a nonprofit Board of  
20 Directors in California, they need some help in  
21 governance. And so I usually require that they have a  
22 session on board governance, roles and responsibilities,  
23 before I will do strategic planning with them, and that  
24 usually turns out so that they need at least a day, and  
25 sometimes a day and a half to do it, and that is

1 considered a retreat because they're off on their own, and  
2 they're all together for a good long time.

3 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Whether they like it or not.  
4 You mentioned that, as a resident of the far north coast  
5 of California, you know firsthand the barriers that  
6 geography can create. Tell us about your experience  
7 living on the far north coast of California.

8 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, I'll tell you a little story  
9 about when I first moved there, when my husband and I  
10 first came to California, and he came to Sacramento, he  
11 didn't have a veterinary license yet in California, but he  
12 was told he could work for the State without a license, so  
13 he took their exam and they offered him three jobs, and  
14 they said, "Would you like to go to LA, or to Bakersfield,  
15 or to Humboldt County?" And he said, "I'll go to Humboldt  
16 County." And they said, "Well, are you sure?" And he  
17 said, "Well, yes, I don't want to go to LA or Bakersfield.  
18 I'll go to Humboldt County." And they kept saying, "Are  
19 you really sure you want to do this?" And he said, "Yeah,  
20 what's wrong with it?" And they said, "Well, there's  
21 mountains on the north, and mountains on the east, and  
22 mountains on the south, and the ocean on the west, and in  
23 between are the funniest doggone people you ever met in  
24 your life." And they're some of the nicest people in the  
25 world, and it's a wonderful place to live. People are

1 generous, compassionate, they're community-minded, they're  
2 a wonderful group of people, and I have many many  
3 wonderful friends there. I happen to love the ocean and  
4 the mountains and the rivers, and not too many people  
5 around, but I also enjoy visiting other places in  
6 California. I even enjoy visiting LA.

7 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: You just don't want to live  
8 there, right?

9 MS. LOCHTIE: Uh huh.

10 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What have you experienced as  
11 the barriers that geography can create?

12 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, I definitely saw that with the  
13 Girl Scout Council. The Council was nine counties, it  
14 went from the ocean to the Nevada border, and there are  
15 several rows of mountains in between all of that, and it  
16 was very difficult sometimes, particularly in the winter,  
17 if there was a meeting being held in Redding, often the  
18 people on the coast could not get there because of slides  
19 or even snow on 299, and there are definitely barriers.  
20 However, those barriers are not as great now as they used  
21 to be, because of conference calls and e-mails, and that  
22 is one of the reasons that I've been able to work on the  
23 Girl Scout Task Force, the Property Task Force, because a  
24 great deal of what we've been able to do has been on  
25 conference calls and so I think that the barriers are not

1 as great as they have been; however, I think those  
2 barriers sometimes determine the type of community that is  
3 in one place or another, and I think that is what the  
4 barrier does in terms of the political barriers and  
5 political districts because of the kinds of things that  
6 are happening within areas, that, you know, the mountains  
7 cut off for a specific reason, or a river is cut off, and  
8 one thing happens on one side of the river and another  
9 kind of thing happens on the other side. So, the barriers  
10 in terms of redistricting are probably still there, but in  
11 terms of the Commission working together, I don't think  
12 they are as great.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: What were the - since you  
14 mentioned the Girl Scout Council - what were the interests  
15 of the people - how are the interests of the people  
16 invited and heard? You said you have this now with this  
17 big communication network. How do you invite their  
18 discussion?

19 MS. LOCHTIE: Oh, we did some through the  
20 Internet, we did some with personal contacts, with  
21 inviting every Girl Scout adult who is in a geographical  
22 area, for example, Humboldt County, to provide input.  
23 They also have representative governance, I guess, to the  
24 Girl Scout Council with the delegates that are elected,  
25 and those delegates come with ideas from the area they



1 represent. The biggest problem with the Task Force is  
2 that most of the camps are in the more populated areas,  
3 and there are many people who went to that camp as a child  
4 and now their children are going to that camp, and it's an  
5 emotional connection that they don't want it mothballed,  
6 or sold, or anything, you know, "Leave my camp alone.  
7 Take somebody else's." But, you know, somebody else, they  
8 have the same idea, too. Again, that's the emotional part  
9 that comes out when people are looking at redistricting or  
10 making any kind of change. And that has to be recognized,  
11 and recognized as one of the things that makes the job of  
12 the Commission so very difficult.

13 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yes. What has been your  
14 worst group experience?

15 MS. LOCHTIE: My worst group experience?

16 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Yes. You've been on lots of  
17 boards and commissions.

18 MS. LOCHTIE: Probably the worst one was working  
19 with a group on a retreat and we were doing work with  
20 strategic planning, and we had - there were two people who  
21 were not happy with what was being discussed, and one of  
22 them walked out, and the other one - I didn't know this at  
23 the time, but it turned out this was that person's  
24 partner, and she also walked out, and everybody was left  
25 there stunned. It was about twenty minutes before we were

1 supposed to wrap up for that day, and I said as the  
2 facilitator, I said, "I think you need to make a decision  
3 right now about how you're going to deal with this." Oh,  
4 when they walked out, they both resigned. They said, "I'm  
5 resigning from this Board." And I said, "We have 20  
6 minutes," well, by that time, 15 minutes. And I said, "I  
7 think you need to take a vote right now whether we will  
8 extend this meeting until this is resolved, because I  
9 don't think you should be dealing with this tomorrow  
10 morning when it's resolved." And I asked them to talk  
11 about this. And as it developed, this happened routinely  
12 when these people didn't get what they wanted, and they  
13 would throw down the towel and, "I'm outta here, I'm not  
14 going to do this."

15 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: These particular players --

16 MS. LOCHTIE: These two participants, yes, and  
17 that was their - that was the way they dealt with it, and  
18 they said - but then they would come back to the next  
19 meeting. And I said, "All right, do you want them to come  
20 back?" And they all said no. And I said, "Okay, you need  
21 to make your decision right now, and if you're going to  
22 accept their resignation, you need to do that in writing  
23 right now and decide if this is what you want." And  
24 that's what we did. We spent another hour with them  
25 discussing what they were doing. It was difficult for me

1 because it was such a shock. It happened just so quickly  
2 and so abruptly, but I was able to get people to extend  
3 the time they were willing to spend there to do it.

4 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: It seems like it might have  
5 been a shock to the group, counterproductive to the goals  
6 of the strategic planning?

7 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, then the next day we were able  
8 to go ahead and finish what we had tried to do because  
9 they people did not come back and it was made clear to  
10 them that their resignations had been accepted and they  
11 were no longer on the Board.

12 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: I don't know if this would  
13 happen on the Commission, but if you were faced with a  
14 situation in a meeting with the Commissioners and two  
15 people absolutely didn't get along and they walked out,  
16 what would you do? And I am not sure what role you would  
17 play on the Commission if you were a Commissioner, but --

18 MS. LOCHTIE: No, that would be a little  
19 different. I was the facilitator, I was in charge, so  
20 that's a very different situation, but I think that I  
21 would want to know how people felt about this and if it  
22 was something that was counterproductive to the work of  
23 the Commission, and there were some way of dealing with  
24 it. I don't know whether there's even a provision for  
25 alternates, or whatever, for the Commission. But I think

1 the people there on the Commission would need to decide  
2 how is this going to work and what are we going to do to  
3 help people be part of this and agree without being  
4 disagreeable, and that comes back to the process because  
5 that's one of the things that I insist on as a guideline  
6 when I'm doing a facilitation, is that people can  
7 disagree, it's fine to disagree, and you should come forth  
8 with your opinion, but you are not disagreeable about it.

9 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

10 MS. LOCHTIE: Thank you.

11 Ms. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Panelists, are there  
12 follow-up questions?

13 CHAIR AHMADI: I don't have questions, but I have  
14 an announcement that I'd like to make at the end of the  
15 interview.

16 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You're not going to get up  
17 and walk out, are you?

18 CHAIR AHMADI: No.

19 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: I have a couple of questions  
20 for you, Ms. Lochtie.

21 MS. LOCHTIE: All right.

22 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: When you were talking about  
23 the importance of the Native American population's  
24 participation in redistricting, you said it was important  
25 because they vote in California, too. How important will

1 it be for the Commission to hear from people who don't  
2 vote?

3 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, I think it would be very  
4 important, but I'm not sure that we will hear from them.  
5 Again, I would hope that we could use as many avenues of  
6 getting the information out there, that there is going to  
7 be a hearing. It is not possible for 14 people to call  
8 everybody in California and talk to them, I mean, that's  
9 not realistic. But there is a way, I think, to reach as  
10 many people as possible, and I think that the Commission  
11 would need to set those standards. They are going to do  
12 the very best they can to stimulate interest in as many  
13 people as possible.

14 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You also - this sort of  
15 dovetails my next question - you also talked about how you  
16 didn't think the Commission should target outreach to any  
17 particular racial groups. Do you think there are any  
18 dangers to using sort of a general outreach plan, and not  
19 working to specifically reach different kinds of people?

20 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, maybe the Commission needs to  
21 do some research into how you reach different groups of  
22 people. I still think it would be somewhat  
23 counterproductive to target just a specific cultural  
24 group.

25 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: When you say "target," do

1   you mean you're going to the Los Angeles area, but your  
2   outreach efforts are exclusively to, say, the African-  
3   American community, as opposed to the African-American  
4   community in conjunction with Latinos and Asians and -

5           MS. LOCHTIE: Right.

6           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay, I misunderstood you.

7           MS. LOCHTIE: Yeah, it should be the whole  
8   community, not just one segment of that community.

9           MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: You talked a little bit  
10   about, when you were responding to standard question 3,  
11   and the harm to the state, you talked about that the harms  
12   will come if the Commission doesn't do its job.

13          MS. LOCHTIE: Yes.

14          MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: What do you think is the  
15   best way for the Commission to convince the public that it  
16   is doing or has done a good job?

17          MS. LOCHTIE: Well, the openness that you have  
18   already demonstrated through this process, I think that's  
19   very important, that people do understand that this is an  
20   open process, and that people can comment. There probably  
21   need to be ways that people can comment in writing, as  
22   well as coming to meetings or sending e-mails, or  
23   Twitters, or whatever it is they do. All the avenues that  
24   are possible, I think, should be opened for people to use  
25   the one that they're most comfortable with, to get the

1 information to the Commission. But I think we have to be  
2 realistic. When you look at voting records, not everybody  
3 votes, and I work on the League of Women Voters and we do  
4 a great deal in outreach and registration of voters, and  
5 education of voters and forums and candidate forums, and  
6 all kinds of things, to educate people and to encourage  
7 people to register and to vote, and we don't reach  
8 everybody. So, I think we need to be realistic. We can  
9 do the best we can, and we need to let the public know  
10 what we're doing and how we're doing it, so that if  
11 somebody comes back later and says, "You didn't ask me,"  
12 then we can say, "We did all of these things. We tried to  
13 reach you." Then, I think that most reasonable people  
14 will realize that the Commission did do a good job.

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: How do you think  
16 California's minority communities will be impacted by the  
17 Commission's work?

18 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, I'm not exactly sure. I have  
19 to say that, you know, I've heard a lot of things about  
20 the way districts have been drawn in the past, people  
21 being very unhappy about minority communities being split  
22 up so that they were part of a bigger community that  
23 didn't listen to them. And I would hope that the  
24 redistricting that's done would be able to be done in an  
25 way that communities of people who have the same ideas and

1 the same desires -- and that maybe a cultural group, it  
2 may be an ethnic group -- feel as though they have been  
3 heard, not that they're being put into a district so that  
4 they can elect someone from their community so much as  
5 that, whoever is running in that community is listening to  
6 their concerns and their desires. I read an article not  
7 very long ago about some redistricting in another state  
8 where the District was predominantly one ethnic group, and  
9 they did not elect the candidate who was from their ethnic  
10 group, they elected the other candidate. And the idea  
11 seemed to be that they were very happy to have people  
12 coming and listening to their concerns, and not just  
13 thinking, "Well, obviously I'm the one who will be elected  
14 and not have to listen to the group." And I think I would  
15 like to see that as a result of the way elections are  
16 conducted and people vote, rather than saying, "We're  
17 going to draw this line so that this minority can have  
18 somebody here, and this minority can have somebody here."

19 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: I don't think that I have  
20 further questions. Panelists?

21 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: No.

22 CHAIR AHMADI: I don't have any questions.

23 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: No?

24 VICE CHAIR CAMACHO: No.

25 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Okay, we have about 16 and



1 a half minutes on the clock if you'd like to make a  
2 closing statement, Ms. Lochtie.

3 MS. LOCHTIE: Well, first of all, I would like to  
4 thank all of you because I have been so very very  
5 impressed with the process that you've used and the  
6 attention to detail, the questions that I've had before  
7 hand, on the phone, and then the questions today. You've  
8 made it very clear that you're doing an excellent job and  
9 whoever you select, I think, if you have vetted them as  
10 well as you're doing this, you're going to come up with  
11 very good names that you're going to submit to the  
12 Legislature. I appreciate the amount of time and effort  
13 you've put in because I know that coming here from 4:30 to  
14 6:00 was probably not one that you were all real eager to  
15 do, so I thank you all. And I really do appreciate the  
16 openness and the process that we've gone through to do  
17 this.

18 I did want to add a couple of things. Your first  
19 question asked about skills and I talked about skills, but  
20 I also wanted to mention things that I consider not so  
21 much skills, as characteristics. And I think that there  
22 are some very specific characteristics that every person  
23 on this Commission should have, and the first one is  
24 integrity. I think that is critical to this Commission,  
25 and I think it needs to be - every person there needs to

1 be seen by the whole State as someone with integrity. So,  
2 I feel that is very important.

3 I also thought that it's probably - let me see if  
4 I can find my little notes - that my rural perspective is  
5 an important one, not that it should be overriding of any  
6 other factors, but I do think that someone on the  
7 Commission should come from a rural background and have  
8 that perspective. I also think that I have a small  
9 business perspective and I think that is a very important  
10 point, as well. In terms of characteristics, I think we  
11 should have vision, if you're on the Commission, you  
12 should have vision, passion, you should have a commitment  
13 to this, and you should be a fair person, you should be  
14 objective, and you should have a positive attitude, and  
15 should be respectful of any person that you come into  
16 contact with. Impartiality, and fairness, and so forth,  
17 all of those things are very very important. So, I think  
18 those are over and above the skills that we talked about  
19 in question 1. I think those characteristics are also  
20 extremely important for anyone on the Commission, and I do  
21 believe that I have all those.

22 And I would like to thank you very much, again. I  
23 don't think I have anything else to add.

24 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

25 PANEL MEMBER SPANO: Thank you.

1 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Thank you so much for  
2 coming to see us, Ms. Lochtie. Mr. Ahmadi, you had an  
3 announcement?

4 CHAIR AHMADI: Yes, I do have an announcement  
5 about my schedule tomorrow morning. My wife has a job  
6 interview early tomorrow morning that I cannot change, so  
7 I get to drop off our kids to school. Usually the drive  
8 takes about an hour to get here, and I assume that I will  
9 be able to make it at 9:00, but if I am not, I have asked  
10 my assistant to fill in for me, and I have shared my  
11 questions with her, so...

12 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: Very good. Good luck to  
13 your wife.

14 CHAIR AHMADI: Thank you.

15 MS. RAMIREZ-RIDGEWAY: And with that, we will  
16 adjourn - or, I'm sorry - we will recess - we will recess  
17 until 9:14 tomorrow.

18 (Recess at 5:46 p.m.)

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